



WIRE

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Hands On

XENAKIS

JOHN LEWIS

LOU GARE

BOOKER LITTLE

tank battles



Since the start of the Eighties Dagmar Krause has been acclaimed as the finest contemporary interpreter of the German song tradition.

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dagmar

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ANTILLES
new directions

WIRE MAGAZINE

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"I can definitely say that *WIRE* won't stop. It
will continue to go forward." CHARLIE
PARKER, 1953.



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We much regret that, as from next month, WIRE's

cover price will be £1.60. Increased costs at every

level compel us to do it. But our subscription rates

will remain unchanged. Now's the time to subscribe!

IF IT'S OCTOBER, THIS MUST BE CANADA

JOHN ZORN, Anthony Braxton, Terry Riley and Bill Fissell are among the artists appearing at the sixth Festival International De Musique Actuelle De Victoriaville (FIMAV), which takes place at Victoriaville in Canada from 6-10 October. Playing times have yet to be finalised but groups scheduled to appear during the festival include John Zorn's Naked City (with Wayne Horvitz, Bill Fissell, Fred Frith and Joey Baron); the Anthony Braxton Ensemble (with Paul Smoker, George Lewis, Joelle Leandre, Gerry Hemingway, Bob by Naughton and Evan Parker); the Leo Smith/Fred van Howe/Sahu Toyozumi trio; the Maarten Altena Octet; the Louis Schluiss Quartet; the Bill Smith/Wolfgang Fuchs/Evan Parker trio; the Marion Brown/Mal Waldron duo; the Burch Morris Trio; and the Bill Fissell Band.

There will also be performances of Robert Ashley's opera *Al Africain* and new compositions by Terry Riley, multi-media events, and lots more. For information about special 30%-50% airfare reductions (on Eastern-Continental airlines) ring Canada 1 800 468 7022, for details about ticket prices, accommodation etc ring Canada 1 819 752 7912.

Also in October, FIMAV's Les Druques Victo label releases its sixth album to date, Marilyn Crispell's *Labyrinth* LP. Take from her acclaimed solo set at last year's festival, the record includes her versions of John Coltrane's "After The Rain" and "Lazy Bird", the ballad "You Don't Know What Love Is" and several of her own improvisations.

MANFRED MEN
E.C.M. RECORDING
artists Egberto Gismonti and Jan Garbarek have US tours lined up for the autumn. Guitarist Gismonti plays Manchester Band On The Wall (20 October), Edinburgh Queens Hall (21), Glasgow Henry Wood Hall (22), and then visits London, Peterborough, Ambleside and Cardiff between 23-26, although where he will play on which days has yet to be finalised.

Jan Garbarek will be touring here in November and December. Dates so far announced are Greenwich Borough Hall (18 November), Brighton Gardner Arts Centre (19), Bristol Old Vic (20), Cambridge Arts Theatre (22), Leeds Astoria (23), St Donat's Art Centre (24), London Town & Country Club (26) and then at venues to be confirmed in Birmingham (27), Exeter (28), Manchester (29) and Kendal (30). In December the saxophonist will be playing concerts in Scotland, dates and venues to be announced.

Further information on both tours from 01 337 4967.

A SHANGE IS GONNA COME

AFRICAN American poet, novelist and playwright Ntozake Shange will be touring the UK in October. Shange, author of the "choreo-poem" "for coloured girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf" and the novel *Sarafina*, *Cyprus* and *Indigo* will be performing her poetry accompanied by Haitian guitarist Jean-Paul Boureilly; duh-poet Jean "Binta" Breece will be supporting. The tour, organised by Apples & Snakes, takes in London Pecham Civic Centre (17 September);

Liverpool Playhouse (18); Darlington Arts Centre (19); Hull Trio's Club (20); Burnet Old Bull Arts Centre (21); Huddersfield, venue tbc (22); Newcastle Polytechnic (23); Oxford Pogus Theatre (24); and London Ratzy Cinema (25). Further details from 01 690 9368.

THIS ONE WILL RUN AND RUN ...

NEW MUSIC in Birmingham has received a fillip with the advent of The Series, a ten-concert season of jazz and 20th-century composed music to be held in the city's new Adrian Boult Hall. Organised jointly by the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMGM), Birmingham Jazz and the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network, The Series begins with "Homage To Joe Harriott", a concert by The Jazz Warriors on 8 October; then continues with concerts by BCMGM (featuring works by Stravinsky, Britten and Berg) on 16 October, London Sinfonietta on 6 November; Dunya, playing music of Mali and India, on 29 November; BCMGM with the Birmingham Electro-Acoustic Sound Theatre (featuring Stockhausen's *Altephosphor 1*) on 11 December. Then, going into 1989, the John Surman/Jack DeJohnette duo on 4 February, the Keith Tippett String Trio plus the Rova Saxophone Quartet on 26 February, BCMGM again on 5 March, and 14 May (with pieces by Ligeti, Lutoslawski, Henze and others), and the Stan Tracey Orchestra, playing *Gemini* and works by Duke Ellington on 16 March. Further details from BCMGM 021 236 1555, Birmingham Jazz 021 414 5703 or CMN 01 629 9495; box office 021 236 5889.

ART ALL OVER THE NORTH SHOCK

CUBAN trumpeter Arturo Sandoval headlines at both the Bradford and Manchester Festivals this month. Jazz concerts at the Manchester Festival, which runs from 21 September to 2 October, include Sandoval (21), NYJO (23), House Of Spirits (24), Danny Thompson's Whatever (27) and the Ronnie Scott Quintet plus the Tommy Smith Quartet (30). Further details from 061 236 9422. A complementary "festival season" of concerts at the Band On The Wall is listed in the *Club Dates* section overleaf.

The Bradford Festival, which runs from 16-25 September, features Sandoval (19); Billy Jenkins, plus House Of Spirits (23); the Don Walker Quartet (24); and the Steve Williamson Quintet (25, two concerts), as well as a variety of pop, soul and African music concerts. Details from 0274 754588.

SWISS AIRS

THE FIFTIETH for this year's Willisau Festival, from 1-4 September, is Chris McGregor's New Brotherhood Of Breath, Randy Weston Quartet, Farafina (1); Ornette Coleman's Prime Time, Maiden Ballet (2), Andrew Cyrille/Irene Schweizer, Jimmy Giuffrè/Andre Jaume, David Murray/Jack DeJohnette duo, Burch Morris group, Peter Schärli's Special Choice, Loose Tubes (3); Hank Roberts Ensemble (w/Tim Berne, Ray Anderson, Bill Fissell etc), Power Tools, The Herb Roberts Ensemble and the Archie Shepp Quartet with Annette Lauman (4). Further details from Willisau 045 81 27 31.

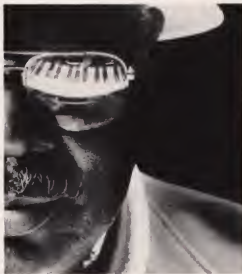
BOOGIE A LA BATTERSEA

BOOGIE pianist Big Joe Duskin is one of several players who will take part in an all day boogie-woogie charity play-in on Sunday 18 September in London's Battersea. The event, to be held in La Salle à Manger restaurant, 153 Battersea Park Road, SW8, is part of a local campaign to save Elm Farm, an inner-city farm area used by underprivileged and handicapped children, which Wandsworth council is threatening to sell off for land development. The restaurant – a specialist in French cuisine – will provide two pianos, and other boogie woogers to appear include Bob Hall, Carl Sonny Leyland, Jonah Lewis, Sean Greig, Johnny Parker and Mike Sanchez. Tickets (which include a three-course meal) are £20 for one of the two sessions – 12.30-6, 7-12. Bookings from Bernard Spiegel at La Salle à Manger, 01 720 4457.

SEPTEMBER TOURS: BRADFORD, MCIPHERSON, WINSTONE

TRUMPETER Bobby Bradford, altoist Charles McPherson and singer Norma Winstone are all on the road to various parts of the UK this month. Bradford, best known for his work on the West Coast with clarinetist John Carter, teams up with old friends John Stevens (drums), Froede Gjerstad (saxophones), and Kent Carter (bass) for London dates at the Bass Clef (1 September), Jazz Action at the Duke Of Wellington (2, 10), Jazz Cafe (6) and The Sun (7), plus appearances at Brighton's Concorde Club (9) and Brentwood's Hermit Club (11).

Mingus alumnus McPherson



BIG JOE DUSKIN – BOOGIE-EYED

plays London Bass Clef (14, 15) and 100 Club (16), Oxford Brewery (17), Sheffield Leadmill (18, lunchtime), Burnley Arts Centre (18, evening), Newcastle Corner House (20), Brighton Concorde Club (23), Cambridge Farmers Club (24), Swansea Munday's (25), Cardiff Four Bars Inn (26), Southsea Cambridge Hotel (27), London Pizza Express (28, 30 and 1 October), Colchester Arts Centre (29) and Stockport Ash Hotel (2 October). McPherson, whose alto can be heard on the *Bird* soundtrack, will be playing with local rhythm sections.

Azimuth vocalist Norma Winstone takes her quartet – Phil Lee (guitar), Jeff Clyne (bass), John Marshall (drums) – on a Jazz Services tour to Manchester Band On The Wall (15), Warmminster Old Bell Hotel (16), Mauldstone Hazlitt Theatre (18), Cardiff Four Bars Inn (19), London Porcell Room (20), Preston Guildhall (21), Darlington Arts Centre (22) and Yeovil The Bell Inn (25).

Further details from 01 240 2430.

Please note that these tour dates

are not repeated in Club Dates.

QUADRUPLE CLEF

LONDON'S Bass Clef club celebrates its fourth birthday this month with a variety of concerts, including visits from UK tourers Bobby Bradford (1 September) and Charles McPherson (14, 15), four nights of vocalist Sheila Jordan (18-22) and one of the first performances by new group Puffball, which features writer Fay Weldon reading from her work accompanied by the Nick Weldon Quartet with Bobby Wellins (11). There is also the likelihood of a visit from US saxophonist Nathan Davis at the end of September.

EAST OF THE SUN

THE NORWICH Jazz Festival will take place this year from 13-19 October. Artists appearing are Lowell Fulson (13); Jazz Warriors (14); Blue Funk Free (15, lunchtime); Dick De Grass Quartet (15); Julian Siegel/Simon Vincent Quartet (16, lunchtime); Don Weller Quartet (16); John Stevens'

Fast Colour, with Annie Whitehead and Dudu Pukwana (17); Steve Williamson Quintet (18); and Pau Brasil (19). All gigs are at the Norwich Arts Centre, except the Jazz Warriors, who will be at the University of East Anglia. Box Office: 0603 660 352.

MOVE IT!

LONDON'S Community Music has now moved – to two new addresses! For administrative and general enquiries, contact them at Interchange Studios, 15 Wilkin Street, London NW5 3NG (01 485 8553); for workshops and courses, contact them at 90 De Beauvoir Road, London N1 4EN (01 241 2614).

STAFF AND DISTAFF

COMPOSITIONS by Nicola LeFanu, Elizabeth Maconchy, Judith Weir and Gillian Whitehead comprise the latest "Women In Music" concert to be held on Sunday 11 September at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. The concert, given by Lontano (conductor Olatunde A. Martins) with soprano Jane Manning, features Maconchy's *My Dark Heart*, the UK premiere of Whitehead's *Out Of This Nettle, Danger*; Weir's *Serbian Cabaret* and LeFanu's *The Old Woman Of Bure*.

Weir's *A Night At The Chinese Opera*, also at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (Kent Opera, 8, 9 September), is among the highlights of the South Bank's Summer season; while Manning, long an advocate for new music, will celebrate her 50th birthday on 20 September with a party at the British Music Information Centre that also launches her newly-formed ensemble, Jane's Minstrels.

where
it's at
this
month

BIRMINGHAM *Hallways*

Art Centre

DON WELLER
QUARTET

BRACKNELL *South Hall*

Perk

GANG OF THREE

BRISTOL *Armsbar*

DON WELLER

QUARTET

CAMBRIDGE

Nasty Sa

PEANUTS HUCKO

CARDIFF *Four Bars Inn*

DICK ROBERTS TRIO

THE HEAVY QUARTET

HUMAN CHAIN

PEANUTS HUCKO

JIM MULLEN

CRAWLEY *Heart Art*

Centre

POWER TOOLS

CECIL TAYLOR/TONY

Oxley Duo,

MINIATURE (TIM

BERNE, HANK

ROBERTS, JOEY

BARON), STEVE LACY,

JASON REBELLO

ANDY SHEPPARD,

DEREK BAILEY/BARRIE

PHILLIPS DUO, LOOSE

TUBES, HUMAN

CHAIN

COURTNEY PINE

EXETER *Drama & Dance Arts*

Centre

CHARLIE HEARNshaw

MANCHESTER *Band On*

The Wall

NEW YORK JAZZ

HUMAN CHAIN,

AKEMI

KUNYOSHI KUHN

BAKHARA

THOMPSON'S

PARAPHERNALLIA

CLEVELAND WATKISS

GROUPE

NEWCASTLE

UPON TYNE

Carver House

LOUISIANA RED

Late Theatre

THE SAFE SENTET

(lunchtimes)

NORWICH *Art Centre*

MERVYN AFER A

OXFORD *Boys House*

IAN THOMAS

QUINTEY

MIKE WAITI

QUARTET

APITOS

FESTIVAL

EEB (lunchtimes)

CHIAROSCURO

QUARTET

DANNY THOMPSON'S

WHATEVER

St George's Hall

LOOSE TUBES

HOUNSLOW *Library*

Centre

ANDY SHEPPARD

QUINTEY

READING *Nine's Win Bar*

TOMMY CHASE

QUARTET

SHEFFIELD *Hallamshire*

Hotel

HORNWEB

WIRE ASSEMBLY

SWANSEA *Monday's Wine*

Bar

JOHN HAM

QUARTET

PEANUTS HUCKO

SWINDON *Leak Centre*

DUDE PUKWANA'S

ZILA

TAUNTON *Brass House*

Theatre

LOOSE TUBES

TRURO *Art Centre*

ANDY SHEPPARD

QUINTEY

London

BASS CLEF *(rehearsal, 4-5)*

DON RENDELL

QUARTET

MARK FITZGIBBON

TRIO

JIM MULLEN QUARTET

ALAN BARNES

QUARTET

PUPPILL

SHEILA JORDAN

BATTERSEA ARTS

CENTRE

HOUSE OF SPIRITS

30

8

29

7, 21

19

23

25

15

18-22

28

DON WELLER

QUARTET

BULLS HEAD

EDUARDO NIEBLA,

ANTONIO FORLIONE

CANAL CLUB

MERVYN AFER A

QUARTET

BRITISH SUMMERTIME

ENDS

ICA

GYPSY SONG FESTIVAL

(see p. 12)

JAZZ CAFE

PETE KING QUARTET

ROADSIDE PICKN

PHIL BENT BAND

THE JUXTEY

AKEMI KUNYOSHI

KUHN TRIO

ED JONES QUARTET

DAVE DEFRIES

ELTON DEAN/JOHN

ETHRIDGE QUARTET

JEAN TOUSSAINT

TRIO

PINKIE ZOO

TALISKIR

BILLY JENKINS

JIM RICHARDSON'S

POGO

CLAUDE DEPPA TRIO

SIMON PURCELL

JULIAN ARGUELLES

QUARTET

100 CLUB

JAZZ WARRIORS

HOUSE OF SPIRITS

30

5

3

17

13-18

1

2

3, 10

5

7

8, 24

9

11

13, 27

16

22

25

29

30

12

27

PURCELL ROOM

ANDY SHEPPARD

QUINTEY

QUEEN ELIZABETH

HALL

BARBARA THOMPSON

ORCHESTRA

OLIVER JONES

ROYAL FESTIVAL

HALL

OSCAR PETERSON

RONNIE SCOTT'S

MONTGOMERY,

PLANT AND STRITCH

29 Aug-Sept 10

MADLINE BELL

BETTY CARTER

26 Sept-Oct 8

STORM CLUB

DESPERATELY

SEEKING FUSION

JASON REBELLO TRIO

STEVE WILLIAMSON

QUINTEY

JAZZ DETECTIVES

WATERMANS ART

CENTRE

PHILIP BENT & JIM

LAMPI

POINTE BIRDS

TED EMMETT &

MARTIN SPEAKE

(lunchtime)

CHRIS BATCHELOR

TRIO

MARTIN SPEAKE

ROGER BEAUJOLAIS &

MARK EDELMAN

1, 16

3, 29

4

8, 30

11

13, 22

Photo by NICK WHITE



STEVE LACY, late addition to *Outside In*. Solo gig on the Saturday.

NEW FUSION

by Paul Gilroy

SOME YEARS ago, Daviet Sigerson, the notorious funk analyst and bass boss of The Disco Dub Band, proposed a revolutionary approach to understanding the evolution of instrumental black dance music. Jazz funk, he argued, was formed in the dynamic tension between the abstract late-night moods associated with Creed Taylor's CTI label and the gurbucket rhythm and jazz typified by organ-trio refugees like Reuben Wilson or The Crusaders in their prime.

Listening to the GADD GANG's penguin-suited presentation of rhythm and blues, it's clear that this insight is still valuable. Their covers of pop soul classics pinpoint the road-house pole of the fusion enterprise and show the band to be worthy heirs to the rough and ready sound of King Curtis's Pins. You can actually hear ace guitarist Cornell Dupree regally puffing on his pipe between choruses while Richard Tee's florid gospel contributions on the piano and subtle mastery of the Hammond organ are as delightfully intelligent



as ever. Eddie Gomez's acoustic bass gives the band a more supple foundation than they enjoyed in their earlier incarnation as Stuff.

If Gadd's Gang suggest that the roadhouse style appears to be the more durable, it's clear that their uptown counterpart still exists though in modified form. After an astonishing debut set THE YELLOWJACKETS have gradually capitulated to the tepid, New Agey ambience which seems to prevail west of the Rockies and which provides today's equivalent to what Sigerson wisely called the penthouse approach. Russell

Ferrante is a fine pianist but their new album *Politics* doesn't give him many chances to advertise the fact. Some of the compositions are pure fluff and the overall texture of the music recalls the most aimless side of Weather Report. The sooner the band can restore their partnership with ex-Miles guitarist ROBBEN FORD the better.

Ford is currently touring in the US, leading an impressive outfit (which also includes Mitchell Forman on keyboards) through an exhilarating and very blues-oriented show. The lack of any new recorded material from such a doughty performer (*actually a new LP should be out by the time you read this* - Ed) underscores the fact that for a long time now, the fusion stakes have been dominated by old records rather than new ones. Significantly, many of the most sought-after tunes on this wing of the Rare Groove movement are those that defy the simple logic of the penthouse/roadhouse split. Albums by WEBSTER LEWIS, AZAR LAWRENCE, CEDAR WALTON, JIMMY OWENS and BOBBY LYLE all confound the Sigerson couplet, playfully weaving together high and low styles to the conspicuous delight of London's most discerning dancers.

The mix of moods on Lyle's 1977 album *The Genre* illustrates the point and represents the finest hour of the At Home production stable. Lyle has found greater fame and fortune recently as Anita Baker's pianist and MD. The welcome news that Atlantic have signed him up suggests that his solo career is about to pick up again. Last year he went back into the studio to make a lively but doggedly straight-ahead album of standards with Stanley Clarke on bass and Alex Acuna on drums. The result of those sessions, *Night Brezz* (Electric Bird), proves conclusively that these days, there ain't much hip-shaking going on in the penthouse. Let's hope he cuts a dancefloor special for his new label.

ANCESTRAL VOICES

by Brian Morton

MANY HAPPY returns to THEA MUSGRAVE at 60. Slightly belated, but no more so than the recognition she's been due since she was half that august threescore. Scottish-born, she has brought a remarkable - and some would say nationally typical - blend of high academic intensity and strongly advocated emotionalism to her music. She is also staggeringly eclectic, ranging from work like the 1953 (and very Scots) *Suite o' Bannanags* (recently revived at Cheltenham) to the electronically abetted guitar piece *Sollagay*, composed 16 years later.

Her most effective work has been vocal and theatrical, what she calls "dramatic abstracts" on historical or literary themes. For my money her opera *Mary Queen Of Scots* dominated the 1977 Edinburgh Festival; her radio-theatre *An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge* was bravely but foolhardily staged at this



year's Cheltenham Festival, with Brian Rayner Cook in the role of the Confederate Peyton Farquhar (a displaced Scot of the Hogg-Stevenson sort), hanged by the Northern army. Ambrose Bierce's remarkable short story holds Farquhar in an ambiguous limbo – is he already dead? or has he escaped his tormentors? – through which his past life runs in rapid, flickering recall. Musgrave's scoring, for baritone, speakers, tape and orchestra, is as daring a use of voice in Britain this century and the equal of anything done by Benjamin Britten, whom she resembles in certain important regards: the transformation of an American literary masterpiece, the shift from diatonic to chromatic and thence serial procedures, a tightening and densening of imagination.

The disparity of reputation could have a racial explanation; Scotland is more usually useful as a source of inspiration than as the homeland of serious composers. My money, though, is on a gender conspiracy, and a certain generic snobbery. Much as in jazz, women have had a poor show in "serious" music, except as performers. All too often, they are dismissed as secondary (Ruth Crawford Seeger, Germaine Tailleferre) or shackled by marriage to a more presumptive reputation (Clara Schumann).

Cheltenham this year also featured an odd but effective new *Spanish Liederbooklet* from JUDITH WEIR, whose superb *Night At The Chinese Opera* at Glyndebourne was almost swamped in the media gush – for and against – eddying round Nigel Osborne's grossly inferior *Electrification Of The Soviet Union*.

Weir is of a younger generation, but it remains true that two of Britain's most interesting composers of this century

have been women, with reputations in inverse proportions to their merits: the late ELIZABETH LUTYENS and ELIZABETH MACONCHY. Even at her death five years ago, Lutyens was still being identified as the daughter of her architect father. Implicit in her belittlement is the fact that she wrote film music, not something that held Sir William Walton back unduly, and that, as did Musgrave and Maconchy, she wrote pieces for children, no hindrance to Britten but somehow damning to a woman. It's not my place to draw up the feminist pantheon but here, surely, are three figures who demand urgent attention.

IN A LATIN GROOVE

by Sue Steward

TRIPS TO New York always guarantee a fresher *Latin Groove*, but this one starts on a very sad note. The day of my arrival coincided with the suicide attempt in a Puerto Rican hotel by HECTOR LAVOE, whose concert earlier had been cancelled due to low attendance. His fall was broken but his condition is grave and his spirit low. A FANIA ALL STARS benefit in San Juan was planned for 14 August. Two weeks later, a car accident in Venezuela killed merengue's foremost percussionist CATAREY, the tambora player on most of the albums released in the Dominican Republic, along with members of Los HJOS DEL RAY and 440, two of the music's most popular and progressive bands. A melancholic cloud hangs over the whole island, despite this being the time of the annual Merengue Festival.

Here in NYC, Puerto Rican salsa, fronted by that clocking cowbell sound, has taken over the dancefloors from merengue. Singers EDDIE SANTIAGO, LALO RODRIGUEZ and JOSE ALBERTO are heard everywhere – from record shops to dance halls to the open-air salsa on the beach parties every weekend in The Bronx.

Meanwhile, over in England: C4 has bought Carlos Ortiz's wonderful *Machito* film, for screening in October. A Carnegie Hall tribute to Machito was TITO PUENTE's night – his composition "Machito Forever" was written to ensure that the man is not forgotten. Jumbo Van Renen, in NYC for the Seminar, carried with him the rough mix of the new Mango project – LOS VAN VAN, re-recording their classic hits and new songs like "La Titi Mania" (which has swept the island this summer). The record's engineer is JOHN FAUSTY,

responsible for the legendary salsa albums on Fania and other New York labels.

A concert at SOB's will turn you green if Gipsy Kings' "Bamboleo" has been a summer favourite. The GKs peddle French-flamenco funk – not real flamenco, as purists insist, but six flamenco guitarists, a timbalero, a conga player, a bass guitarist, a keyboard man whose liking for Arab music and RAI shows in every angular chord, and a vocalist with an impassioned Arabic tone – they left no hand unclapping in the packed double houses. The latest FANIA ALL STARS album, *Bamboleo*, pays tribute to the band in their covers of the title song (sung by CELIA CRUZ), "Quiere Saber" and the stomping "Djebi Djebi".

DANIEL PONCE's *Arave* album received even less publicity here than in England, so he's not the national hero of the new music scene he could be. Let's hope the same fate doesn't await YOMO TORO, whose spectacular Antilles album is out now. Daniel played at Mikell's, a smart Upper West Side jazz club, with a band drawn from the in-town Latin and jazz scenes, including EDY MARTINEZ's faultless piano and the powerhouse drums of BOBBY SANABRIA, striding between the jazz and Cuban traditions and pairing with Daniel's conga orchestra. Over at the Blue Note, a Latin jazz fest has included PAQUITO D'RIVERA and pianist HILTON RUIZ (check his RCA album *El Camero*).

I dedicate this column to HECTOR, whose beautiful voice has brought solace and hope to millions, whose own life has been stormy and tragic – may his body mend and his soul find some peace in years to come.

ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS

by Brian Kopf

METAPHYSICAL indecency. It is no coincidence that the world is brought to its fullest audibility by musics that obsessively and minutely detail the sores of their makers. The rest is just so much guesswork. But the shameless, indecent metaphysicians draw on the empirical evidence that incriminates the world in the scarring of being. To date the best cases made against this planet and the mean times it's passing through come from Clint Ruin's FOETUS ejaculations and LYDIA LUNCH, both of whom debut rare incarnations in

London this month. Ruin's concert at the Town and Country Club on 20 September – under the title FOETUS INTERRUPTUS – ends his boycott of the self-appointed style capital, for which he has hitherto expressed the profoundest disgust. This time the city will not get off so easily, for the line-up of FOETUS INTERRUPTUS promises to realise the full madness of the



Foetus project. It includes two Swans, Norman Westberg and Algy, ex-Sonic Youth drummer Bob Berr and para-musical force Nainz Watts. Coinciding with the visit is the release of Foetus Interruptus' "Thaw" (Some Bizarre). As Pig, Watts – who also handles sound for Einstürzende Neubauten – has an LP out on Waxtrax, consisting of manically organised Prince samples.

The following two nights at the Mean Fiddler, Lydia Lunch performs with the all-woman group HARRY KRWIS, in which she doubles up on vocals with Sonic Youth bass player Kim Gordon and copulates guitars with Pat Place, ex of Bush Tetras. The drummer, we're told, is a big Megadeth fan. If the level of metaphysical inquiry doesn't irreversibly alter your reality, the molecule-crushing music will.

NOXI ABATEMINI. Just how far New York's SONIC YOUTH have gone to reconciling themselves with melody can be measured by the release of an early notebook-type cassette *Sonic Death* (Blast First) that precedes their London Astoria concerts on 16 and 17 October. Their progress is like warching a film in reverse of an exploding Cadillac reconstructing itself. The tape is a primitive, bracing piling-up of shattered guitar harmonics and metal clangs, fragmented echoes that will later be melded together in song. Today's Sonic Youth are a whole lot sweeter and, arguably, a lot more effective in raising the listener up on wave upon wave of surf guitar noise. On a good night the tide never recedes . . .



*Bars in Barbados stay
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long enough to enjoy
a glass of golden Cockspur Rum.*



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Malcolm Armstrong,
Barman, Mullins Beach Bar,
St. Peter, Barbados.



If you like drinking you may like the taste of smooth Cockspur Rum.



a rom do

Six days of music from the Gypsy nation.

By Mark Sinker

A CULTURE without borders that is none the less a solid reality, *Rom* lives not only in the hearts of its scattered people, but also in endless nuggets of influence in European, Afro-Caribbean, Latin and Asian popular musics, a representation of rebel threat, and irreducible *wanderlust* trapped uneasily on the inner margins and byways of settled society.

The Gypsy Nation stretches across three continents, and reaches into two more, from the Punjab to Eire via Yugoslavia and Morocco, and stretching at last towards Americas North and South. Since the fifth century, migrant *Romani* communities have travelled westwards from Rajasthan, driven from place to place by the threat (and fact) of genocide.

In our own century, as many as half a million died in the Nazi concentration camps. But the prejudice against Travellers still exists, to be seen in the countless petty restrictions and difficulties that beset them in most European countries. Everywhere harassed into nomadism – by modern societies as unable to tolerate mobility as they're willing to force the Gypsy Nation into it – *Rom* is a culture still stigmatised as "the outsider", undesirable, a threat to order.

"In the beginning we took after our ancestors, but we suffered, for the Egyptian people were against us," says a spokesman for the hard-to-find Gypsy community in Egypt itself (as quoted in Jeremy Marre's *Beat Of The Heart*). "So that we could settle in Luxor we encouraged our sons to become musicians and our daughters to dance. In that way we might become accepted by the local people. So we invaded their hearts and minds with our arts."

Bob Wisdom, organiser of the ICA's "Lords And Ladies of Little Egypt" Festival, and a Black American himself, notes the analogy with Afro-American culture in the States, although he also argues it can only be pushed so far. But Eurocentric thought does seem to need this image of a myth-laden and uprooted wanderer culture to hold up as mirror to itself – there's been a constant flirtation with the romance and the danger of this alien presence (at once threatening and re-invigorating) ever since it first appeared.

And from Paganini to Django Reinhardt, and across a slew of nationalist, exotic and impressionist composers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, a wave of innovation, imitation and appropriation reflected an emotional range in the *tzigane* and other gypsy forms that classical music felt it had itself lost. As a

simultaneous communication of loss and identity across the years, this music spoke to the world at large and in doing so stirred up the unknown, irresistibly.

We can quickly pick up on shared gestures in what survives of *Rom* in each region. Finger gestures in Flamenco that stem from the cult of Kali herself; turns and curls of speed in the music, and the burrs and drag of sound-friction; ancient words that survive to puncture the local dialect (Kalya Jag, for example, are from Hungary); *Romany* itself still flourishing as a language; a system of body-torsion and song-form that alternates cool dynamism with passionate stasis – all this adds up to a form of rhythm and expression that's more than just one more World Music.

That must be part of the importance of this festival – what we can learn in depth about something we've long known in dreams, about communal survival, permanent exile, and life during wartime, *Rom* social structure is about difference, refusal and independence from dominant norms – about respect for the past and the need for mobility – about the most powerful and profound emotions – and like the blues its music has expressed this unstintingly. But the Gypsy Nation has paid a terrible price over the years for such dangerous and infidel habits of mind and organisation.

In the past, these Invaders of the Heart have been repulsed violently, to our cost as well as theirs. The rich complexity of the music in all its scattered forms is once again welcoming us in. "The Lords And Ladies of Little Egypt" will bring together *Romany* representatives from France, Spain, Ireland, North Africa and the Iron Curtain countries, so even in itself it's a fascinating experiment. But a wider event is being acknowledged too. In the last two decades, the International *Romani* Union has been raising consciousness for exactly this kind of necessary unity. The ICA show is just one manifestation of this evolving political will.

"The Lords And Ladies of Little Egypt" runs from 13–18 September and features The Gypsy Kings, Ivo Papasov, Naqqali, Hasan Erraji, Chel Kader, David Spillane, Dzhang, Odjila, Kalya Jag, Pata Negra, Ketama and a variety of other Flamenco performers, as well as further acts not yet confirmed. All shows will be at the ICA, except the Gypsy Kings and Ivo Papasov at the Town & Country Club 13 September.

EVERYBODY SHOULD OWN A COPY OF THIS.



NOBODY SHOULD OWN A COPY OF THIS.



SONY.



Barry Witherden

meets the man who

steered

saxophone

LOU? LOU'S BACK IN TOWN

into the Gare Age

Photograph by

Mark Harrison

LOU GARE was in London for a few days to play three gigs with Eddie Prévost; there had been a Sun session in Clapham on the Wednesday, and an appearance at The White Hart in Holborn on the Thursday, with Marcio Mattos added. The trio were to play again at The Canal Club on the evening of the Saturday when Gare and I met for a lunchtime chat, then Lou was back to Exeter where, after this unexpected mini-festival of Gare, the gigs would be few and far between.

Lou and Eddie first teamed up in 1963, before the tenorist became part of the Mike Westbrook band, where he played alongside Keith Rowe and Lawrence Sheaff. As Westbrook's music became more organised there seemed to be less room for the impulse towards something freer felt by Gare, Rowe and Sheaff. This could lead to interesting situations, and Lou recalled that some people would come along mainly to hear the results of this musical tension. It was inevitable that the three should part company with Westbrook, and there was a reunion with Prévost in 1965 when AMM was formed. Other members of the band came and went, including Cornelius Cardew, but for about a decade AMM was Gare and Prévost. Eventually Lou felt that he had done all that he could in that context, and he was planning to leave London anyway. He and Eddie still play together occasionally, such as on this trip to London.

Since he has been in Exeter, Gare has formed a free-jazz trio (now defunct), played some solo gigs performing between screenings at avant-garde film festivals, recorded a film soundtrack (mainly written by someone else but giving him passages for improvisation) and generally just gigged when a reasonable situation presented itself. Most of the time he has to content himself with lone practice to keep the chops in shape.

AMM carried on in a different form after Lou left, and I wondered if he had ever wanted to step back in. He felt this would be impracticable. AMM music is very personal, very delicately balanced, rather self-contained and often self-referential. To introduce a new element, even from someone so involved in the original conception of the band, could well throw things out of kilter. Nevertheless, the old empathy with Prévost is still there. The duo set at The Sun was entirely convincing and coherent. It had followed a typically impressive performance by Evan Parker in duet with Mark Sanders, an excellent young drummer. Lou commented ruefully, "there's not much to play after that, but we'll see what comes out". What came out was a continuously evolving line of quietly assertive melody with

Prévost's percussion dancing and scurrying around and alongside.

At The White Hart the character of the music changed in recognition of the third element, Mattos's strong bass playing. Prévost used a different kit and Gare's tenor was a little more abstract, a little rougher, the big, throaty lower-register notes more robust. But there were still the apparently unending stretches of unrammelled melodic development.

A favourite jibe at free jazz has always been that the participants can get away with anything as no one can say whether there are any mistakes. In fact free improvisation exposes a lack of conviction or direction very quickly indeed. As Lou explained, free jazz throws the musician back on his or her own resources, and of course what's not there is not going to be able to come out in the music. The free player has no chord cycle, rhythmic pattern or melodic contour to hold on to until the next bit of inspiration comes round.

For a prime mover of one of the most uncompromising and subversive bands in post-Ornette music Lou Gare comes over as a surprisingly quiet and retiring man, a little like Sonny Rollins, who has been an influence on him. That influence is still sometimes discernible, for example in the way he may pace across the stand to bounce some notes off the wall. And, of course, in the long, seamless yarns that unwind out of the bell of the sax. Unlike Rollins, however, he does not constantly spring out cards from a massive mental index of tunes; though on Wednesday there had been several bars of a close paraphrase of "Straight No Chaser". Gare's performances are pure, spontaneously created melodic invention.

He and Prévost, in the time when they alone comprised AMM, evolved an utterly original style of music. Unlike earlier editions of AMM they seemed to operate purely within the jazz tradition, but their brand of introspective interplay had no exact counterpart elsewhere and their silences were genuinely integral to the music, reflective pauses during which the ideas somehow continued to develop, rather than dramatic gestures. This can be heard at its best on *To Hear And Back Again*, on Matchless MR3, which (rather surprisingly) is readily obtainable in the major record chains, while *The Crypt* (with Rowe, Cardew and Christopher Hobbs) is now available again on Matchless MR5.

Gare is a one-off. The neglect, the lack of gigs, is the price that it seems has to be paid by any musician anywhere who dares to be different, let alone unique.

G w b i z z

Kenny G

achieves

fusion with

Mike Fish

Photo by

Andrew Wood

INFURIATING—IT'S always the people you want to hammer down who turn out to be the real nice guys. Kenny G—for Gorelick, since you're asking—is one of those.

His music attracts a brushfire of expletives from weary critics: soft, sappy, bland, tedious, laid-back, shallow, soporific, boring. That kind of thing. It's the simplest of charges to lay at his door. Kenny G doesn't laugh it off, but he isn't much bothered by it. He reaches people: US sales of two million plus for *Dandelion*, his last album, tell their own story. I saw him wow a capacity Hammersmith audience where he played light, gingerly funky tunes on alto and soprano, took no chances, played them sweet and shapely and let the melodies speak for themselves. Hysteria. A brief display of circular breathing: collective ecstasy. No wonder jaaaaaz cats howl. This doesn't happen to Evan Parker.

Mr G grew up in a black neighbourhood in Seattle, where R&B was everybody's thing and Grover Washington counted as high romantic art. Fair enough. But you can't stay in Seattle and get work. Once he'd paid his early dues he joined Jeff Lorber's Fusion and moved to Los Angeles, where the real work is. How does he select sessionman projects now?

"It depends on how close it is to my stuff. At first, I'd take anything. Now I do things that don't have anything to do with the kind of music I play on my own records. I played on this record for an Australian band, Dragon—you ever heard of them? Cr-a-a-z-y stuff! Weird! Was good, though. I think I played something that was appropriate to the song."

Film scores?

"Way harder. You'd think it'd be easy to get a movie, because it's all instrumental stuff, but it's tough. People don't like taking chances. I want to do something that's easy for me. Somebody asked me to do something out of the 20s—I mean, I'm the worst guy to even think about that! I don't know anything about *ragtime* music!"

Er, acoustic jazz?

"You mean like a traditional jazz context? No, I'm not good enough at it. I didn't practise that kind of stuff. It's not hard, but other people are more accustomed to doing it than me."

"I improvise like crazy, but it's in the context. On 'Songbird', on the album, there's a solo inside the context of the song which is as legitimate as anything anyone's doing in a bebop bag. Same kind of jazz licks, but they happen to flow in a more contemporary situation. I don't want to repeat the past licks of John Coltrane and Charlie Parker. That's all that is, when you

hear a young guy playing today, playing bebop. He's not playing anything Charlie Parker didn't play. Technically, it might be unbelievable, but what's he contributing?"

So what does he play? The buzzword here is "contemporary". To grasp why G's albums have been successful, you need to understand American radio formats, the shrewd balancing of instrumental and vocal tracks, and the kind of gentle, romantic music that audiences have loved since the days of Guy Lombardo. Which brings us back to words like "bland" and "boring".

"Yeah," laughs Kay Gee. "We do the jazz festivals all the time in the States. From the audiences—great reaction. From reviews—the worst. We did the Playboy Festival... you know Leonard Feather? Oh, they should make him stay at home. Every year. This year he said, Kenny G's success defies explanation. He's a competent but uninspired sax player, and his soprano sax sounds like it has a sinus condition. That was it! Nothing about what we did, how many tickets we helped sell..."

Kenny can afford to be generous, at least. He comes on like a nice Jewish kid, honestly self-critical—"sometimes I play a song through, and it sounds like I'm thinking about my taxes! You can be playing a solo and thinking about your dinner." One of his successes here was a vocal tune called "Hi, How You Doing?"—"I hate it! I won't perform it! It's not sincere!"

So why doesn't he do an all-instrumental album? The vocal tracks—his upcoming set includes a guest shot by Smokey Robinson, for instance—seem like sweeteners to get on the radio.

"Well, that was well-said. It's more like variety. I like listening in the vocal tracks because they give me a nice break, to get away from the sax. It makes for a more interesting record."

"The problem is, instrumentals are too *long-lasting*. A song like 'Songbird', people are gonna listen to my next one and go, well, it's not 'Songbird'. It's going to be tough to make them forget the old one. Last one like that was Chuck Mangione in 1980 with 'Feel So Good'. Guy's never done anything else. Even *I'm* going, ah, there isn't another 'Feel So Good' there!"

It can be a little hard being Kenny G. You're loved, or you're hated. At a recent concert, Kenny's girlfriend sat behind a couple of guys in the second category.

"These guys were roasting me, dogging me, aw, this guy's no good, I hate him! She says, can you guys keep it down? If you hate it so much, why are you here? By the end of the show they were saying, hey, he can really play. They legitimised me. Now they see what I'm doing is hard too."



L	I	V	E
N	A	P	E
*			

Cecil Taylor European Big Band

BERLIN
KONGRESSHALLE

THEY SOUNDED like mystical hooligans as they spilled out of the dressing room and into the darkness of the hall, trouble's noise in the brewing, luminous. Seventeen voices in a glottal, chthonic chant. Necks craned to try and locate the sound source but it was slowly dispersing, infiltrating, an eerie invasion. It was fully five minutes before the first musicians began to mount the stage, still grunting and spitting out bits of syllables and pre-verbal groans, shuffling and stomping feet and clapping. Then they were all there. What a crew, almost the entire history of European improvisation, dogged soldiers of anti-fortune.

The original 1968 machine gunners – Breitzmann, Bennink, Kowald, Evan Parker – were on hand, grizzled but fighting fit and finally (*finally*) supported by some fresher faced reinforcements. Including: Hannes Bauer, the young DDR trombonist, Louis Slavis, the Workshop de Lyon reedman, Peter Van Bergen, the Dutch tenorist. And another handful of renegades who slor less neatly into the music's historical development, trumpeters Enrico Rava and Tomasz Stanko, cellist Tristan Honsinger, multi-instrumentalist Gunter Hampel (tonight on vibes only). . . Free music has certainly contained a multiplicity of intentions. But all of these men acknowledge a large debt to Cecil Taylor, one of the great

musical minds of our time. That's why they were here.

Taylor was the last to appear, slithering towards the piano with balletic elegance and making a few shadow boxer's jabs at it while still singing some variation on "Cun-Un-Un-An". A white sun hat was jammed down over shoulder-length dreadlocks. He wore pink cotton pants tucked into bright yellow socks. No shoes. And a pink sweatshirt, back-to-front and inside-out. Squinting, I could just make out the shirt's motto, in reverse. It said YTTIC ZZA: "Jazz City." That struck me as marvellously symbolic, the perfect apparel for the man who had inverted jazzville and tossed it on its ear.

Bennink led the charge, immediately shattering sticks on the snare, broken shafts propelled 30 feet over the heads of the audience. It was like Agincourt! He built to a thunderstorm crescendo then backed off as the horns edged in. They filled the air with a big, arching melody, a song of praise in strolling anaphora, its theme sweeping through the orchestra from brass to string section (Kowald, William Parker, Honsinger). How much of this was written? Much, as far as I could gather, but there was considerable leeway for interpretation. The band had rehearsed for a week with Taylor writing the piece on the spot, following his "Segments/Sliding Quadrants" approach. The written materials, riff-like relationships of notes, were wedges that the players could drive into the group sound, trusting to their own judgment for velocity and dynamics.

One had the impression of a volatile participatory democracy in action. Section leaders (very often Peter Van Bergen and Hannes Bauer) would cue in the themes but if anybody had a better idea, they'd assume control. Louis Slavis,

Evan Parker and Enrico Rava were adept at this internal structuring, which was built up, layer upon layer, while soloists constantly rotated and chains of call-and-response ricocheted around the band. It was dense, it was complex, it was coherent, it was fantastically exciting. One adrenalin shock after another. This was the sound of the Winged Serpent aimed at the Next Level, scales and feathers flapping for the spheres.

Cecil Taylor? Description fails miserably to locate what he does, as Lee Jeske once exhaustively proved in a *down beat* story (Cecil is thumping, Cecil is pummelling, Cecil's stopped pummelling and started thrashing etc etc); not much gets to be said about how *animal* his every gesture is. Even when he treats the piano purely percussively, he works it with a drummer's sensitivity to texture and light and shade. The fat on the keyboard has a bass drum's punch, when he lets the back of his hand fall on to the keys the sound has the gentle pugnacity of a cymbal splash. A fast arpeggio with the thumb nail jerks the band to attention like a martial roll on the snare. And all of this is happening in a world too speeding to tremble.

One aspect I was not prepared for was Taylor's generosity. Brainwashed, perhaps, by all those stories of the Early Days, of Cecil zipping ahead and Lacy and Neidlinger lumbering clumsily behind, I was startled by how attentive he was to all the musicians' contributions. He'd taken the measure of what each man could do and commended himself to making them sound better at it. He'd edit and punctuate, make the occasional windy solo seem a dramatic masterpiece by slapping exclamation marks into it or render it profound by dignified plucking at the piano's bass

strings. There was room enough for him to flaunt his inexhaustible virtuosity but he refused to make the group merely his showcase; he was far more interested in the collective interplay and, plainly, thrilled by it.

In general, the Big Band's discipline merited the highest commendation (medals all round, gents) but particular episodes knocked the breath out of this listener. In the first set Enrico Rava's bright sprays of notes matched perfectly the accelerative nature of the music, I wish Enrico would spend more time in the free zone. Then there was Breitzmann's taragato solo with a twisting elasticity of line that was utterly hypnotic.

The second set was particularly remarkable for a duet by Louis Slavis (on clarinet) and Hannes Bauer's trombone which pushed towards the kind of climax not often heard since Coltrane and Sanders tried to drill holes in the sky. Here, Evan Parker restrained the other horns from entering, letting Louis and Hannes fully develop their idea. On Evan's own tenor solo the whole orchestra raged along with him until the walls began to shake, then screeched to a halt – a contraction in sound and space that suddenly revealed Cecil and Gunter Hampel playing the same trail. I couldn't see how this was possible. How could Hampel have *found* those notes inside that thundercloud of music? Or did Cecil find them?

The word was that the Big Band's debut, the previous night, had tended towards muddiness and indulgence. The night I caught them, there was none of this, instead a polished brilliancy and alertness that let the music rove many moods. There were long, chamber-like passages where vibes and cello and the two basses encouraged Cecil to play

NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN photos by DAVE PEABODY



something pretty. And there were rollicking, almost traditional big-band passages where Bennink was in his element, punk face lit up in pleasure as he played out his Big Sid Carter fantasies to the hilt.

It was music that ate up time. They started just after nine; a three-hour performance just flashed past. Suddenly, they were leaving the stage, Bennink pausing to rattle sticks against the plate-glass windows. Tristan Honsinger almost had the last word, finishing the set with a tiny glissando that had an inter-rugative tone, like: Hmmm?? What do you think? A few seconds' silence, then the audience went off the deep end, cheering, whistling, throwing hats in the air. It was a great night.

At the dressing-room door, Rava, French horn player Martin Meyers and Hannes Bauer turned back to play a final fanfare. Proud, celebratory. FMP recorded the evening, and I'm sure that the album will confirm that this was an important occasion for what used to be called free jazz. Taylor's musical revolution of 30 years ago had been comprehensively absorbed by these Europeans. Now, they could meet and play one music. As near-equals and friends. A circle has been completed. The repercussions will be entirely positive.

STEVE LAKE

Michael Finnissy's *The Undivine Comedy*

LONDON
ALMEIDA FESTIVAL

MICHAEL Finnissy's new opera, *The Undivine Comedy*, commissioned and staged by outgoing Almeida artistic director Pierre Audi as part of an ambitious three-year pro-

gramme of new works, brought the 1988 Almeida Festival to a climax. As climaxes go, it wasn't as good for me as it must have been for them.

Operatic narrative is a tricky business, usually best when least, dependent either on the crudest of cultural archetypes and plots (*Don Giovanni*) or on a shared familiarity with certain canonical texts (*Otello*, *Lulu* or *La traviata*) reduced to their barest essentials. Given the notorious "language problem", you shouldn't be worrying too much about the action.

A certain degree of opacity does no harm: Glass's and Wilson's *Einstein On The Beach* achieves an almost absolute pitch of semantic relativity, just as there was a "different" Battle of Waterloo for every participant (so Tolstoy and Stendhal claimed) each member of the audience creates his or her "own" best gesture for *Einstein*.

It succeeds not least because it almost entirely avoids the conventionally dramatic. The reverse applies with *The Undivine Comedy* where the degree of histrionic intensity from the principal players (Richard Jackson, Nigel Robson, Richard Morris, Pauline Vailancourt and the marvellous Mary King) thwarts any approach to comprehension. The contrast with Finnissy's Proust piece *Red Earth* (heard, to time of writing, only in rehearsal) is very striking. There, the musical air is as clear as the Australian landscape it celebrates. With the opera, all is murk, musk and cordite.

Finnissy takes his basic material from a play by (please don't ask) Zygmunt Krasiński, salts and peppers it with passages from Hölderlin and de Sade. There was a recent compilation CD of Callas "mad scenes". That's roughly the effect here, with the borrow-

ings from the mad German poet (see *July W/m*) and the Divine Marquis. The score is laden with organ-heavy tantrums and so freighted with emotion as to render impossible any sympathetic identification with the characters' situation.

So far as I understood it, the Count (Richard Jackson, brooding and daft as a brush) is torn between his Countess (Vallancourt) and a Sadeian-Corcoran Muse (King). He wisely follows the latter but finds that his wife is touched with genius as well. (Note: hints of a feminist subtext.) There is a lot of art versus agonising as his undefined policy (made entirely of cast iron) begins to fall metaphorically apart. With a hint of Tamburlaine, he kills his son (Morris) before going completely off the deep end and throwing in his lot with the *Leader* (Robson). For about two thirds of the action, I fought an almost irresistible urge to shout things like "Oh no, it isn't" and "Aaahhh" but I think this might establish a critical mass's nest, because I think Finnissy's models are grander than, say, Birrwhistle's.

Since any identification is of that very stereotypical sort, it may be that the whole thing is a meta-essay on operatic character. But then again, every opera is that and every great opera is something more and else.

Loved the set, loved the cozzies, but, those apart, flummoxed in the extreme...

BRIAN MORTON

Womad

BRACKNELL
SOUTH HILL PARK

ARRIVING late Friday evening I hastily secure temporary accommodation on the post-Glastonbury teepee chic

L	I	V	E
u	t	r	e
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of the campsite and make straight for the main marquee, where Cuban fusion-ists Los Van Van are already chugging through the highlights of a 20-year back catalogue. From 100 yards back, bassist and self-appointed MC Juan Formell resembled a mulatto Joe Sealin on vacation - which may or may not give rise to some minor political conundrums - and spent as much time admiring the vocal talents of the "irresistible" Pedrito as he did cutting in the various sections of the group. "Por Encima Del Nivel", which had Juan singing the praises of all his companions individually, sped past in an aggrandising whirl of trombones, violins and percussion and prompted the least affected audience participation I have ever witnessed. Two more hours of these customised *charangas* and I'm ready to start talking job satisfaction.

Once inside the festival fringe's Arts Centre housing I am quickly brought up to date on the vagaries of contemporary music and why events like this invariably make me want to cut and run. For this dubious honour the twin-bass drone of miserabilist journeyman Hugo Largo ("Dazed And Confused") as an encore (Very on-top-of-the-moment) must take credit. No regrets though on being able to report on the day's closing "acoustic session", where the beyond-risky bare foot shuffles of Amayenge's drum and dance troupe seamed into Pa Jobareh's epic Savannah song. As with Dembo Konte and Kausu Kuyateh's performance the next night, Pa's proto-country blues workouts had a raw edge that recent recordings

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ORPHY ROBINSON
ROLAND PERRIN'S EVIDENCE
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by traditional West African musicians have mostly sequenced out. On the other hand, it could have something to do with the fact that he is still only 12 years old.

Saturday started pleasantly enough, the sun was out, the floods in the turlers had yet to reach knee height and on the theatre stage Japanese percussionist Joji Hirota and Asian *santur* exponent Kiran Pal Singh were quietly filing their entry for the weekend's most unlikely combination. As you might expect from musicians who site yoga, Buddhism and the guru Kumar Sharma as major influences, their music isn't about to get them into trouble with the neighbours. Plaintive ragas embellished by the passing of hands over gongs. Meditative is the word, I think.

Back in the main marquee Remmy Ongala was exhibiting a glowering pot belly and an outlandish taste in handwear, while at his back Orchestra Super Matimila were attempting to inject some variation into *mboundi* four-on-the-floor head charge. Enterprising would be an apt description here probably, if only to underline the many twists and turns which this Tanzanian ten-piece managed to work into such a closely defined area. It was unfortunate then that the group's two halves found it difficult to hit peak form together; by the time Remmy had found a suitably exuberant forcing the Orchestra had run out of ideas and were well into the standard Zairean practice of detached bar counting. But I hadn't come to see them anyway, so their set was more of a bonus than a body prize.

From Nusrat Fateh Ali

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Khan, however, I expected greatness and for the most part got it. On record *Qawwali*, the devotional music of Pakistan's Sufi region, has a tendency to blur with uncomfortable memories of high street Krishna processions and the mid-70s wanderings of prototype ethnos like The Mahavishnu Orchestra, thus tempering its historical intensity. Live the spectacle takes over – even if it amounts to no more than the sight of a few men sitting cross-legged on a Persian rug with their arms raised beseechingly aloft – and the impact of ten *sehzaw* wails colliding with dipping harmoniums and tablas is sufficiently entrancing to bypass all prejudicial reference points. The rest of Saturday was mostly given over to the sounds of Africa; ancient, modern and some points in between. Youssou N'Dour turned in a performance that seemed to mirror the uneasy duality of his current position. His arrogant soulman strut and keening *gezap* of stage dynamism soon rubbish all other claims to the role of Afro-pop's international figurehead, but his music remains an unstable and vulnerable alliance between traditional complexity and adopted simplicity; an unlikely recipe for imminent world domination. I'd say Maybe Youssou's reached a point where the struggle to reconcile domestic integrity with the compromise necessary for crossover is beginning to take its toll. Whatever, compared to Amayenge's

marathon set of unlettered Zambian guitar acrobatics later that night, or even Konte and Kuyateh's subsequent kora duets, the music sounded forced and unyielding.

The next day Svinurai's vibrant *obutu* rituals, Ym Stammen's Nordic peace convoy pop and the lilting palm wine laments of S.E. Rogie echoing wearily round the main marquee were all I had time for before circumstances contrived to force me away early. They were enough to make the initially inviting premiere exit regrettable.

TONY HERRINGTON

Michel Petrucciani Judy Roberts

NORTH SEA JAZZ FESTIVAL

IT LOOKED as if the Sheriff from *Blazing Saddles*, a Cleavon Little look-alike, was intent on delaying the start of the Michel Petrucciani concert until next Tuesday. A tuff-dude in a cowpuncher's jacket, ten-gallon hat and riding boots seemed obsessed with the drum kit, which he used, with stagehands dancing attendance, to box the compass.

The whole paraphernalia – snare, tom-toms, bass drum, hi-hat, cymbals, stool and microphones – was moved in a bewildering profusion of minuscule directions until they came to rest on the precise co-ordinates the dude finally specified. Then there was the drum stool. Yup, sure must get the drum stool right. Down a bit, up a bit. Down a bit more, up a bit more. Down, up – will he ever stop frigging around? Then, at last, the announcer, almost sobbing with relief to introduce the found himself speaking into cupped hands. The dude, quick on the draw, tilted his stertion back and drawled into the hi-jacked mike, "I'm Roy

Haynes, for those of you who don't know." No one seemed prepared to admit that they did not, in fact, know. "I invented modern jazz drumming," he continued modestly, adding as an afterthought, "along with Kenny Clarke."

This serio-comic overture was silenced by one glance with the arrival of Petrucciani. His authority was incisive. He led, bassist Gary Peacock and the dude followed. His percussive, probing lines seem to stare directly into the soul; powerful and unerring, it was as if he might chance upon some unspoken tryst that's better left ignored. His playing questions and searches – every harmonic movement held up to close scrutiny. His technique is commanding, his vision sometimes bleak. Multi-note whirlpool asides alternate with long, single-note lines that shimmer with percussive power. Peacock shone, ever supportive and discreet, but the dude, less able to join the ebb and flow of the music, played straight down the line – just like he did 40 years ago. Petrucciani, diminutive yet so dominant, used the concert to serve notice that he's one of the most important of the young musicians to emerge during the 80s.

On a less exalted plane, Judy Roberts showed she has talent and personality to spare. The Chicago pianist and vocalist seems on the verge of becoming an overnight success – despite some 20 years in the business. She's recorded with Ray Brown (Pauze), been eulogised by Leonard Feather, picked up rave reviews the length of the States and finally she's just got her first CD out. Animated and coy, she can swing like the clappers and sings in a cute, piping voice that may not move mountains, but could well make them go weak at the knees.

STUART NICHOLSON



Scores from the North Sea Festival by GERT DE RUNTJH.
Clockwise from left, PATTI BOWEN, JAMES NEWTON
QUARTET, STREET ACCORDIONIST, PAPA JOHN
CREACH, CHARLIE HADEN.



JOHN LEWIS

QUARTET 'TIL THE END OF TIME

*After 35 years of the MJQ, their pianist and composer
is still advancing on the heart of the matter*

BY

PHOTO

RICHARD

JEAN

COOK

CAZALS

LUNCH, in a well-appointed and expensive restaurant in Mayfair. While Percy Heath investigates one of the largest Dover soles ever to be set before a diner — "Plenty, plenty sole, man!" — and Milt Jackson, his head sinking below his shoulderline, looks curiously at his plate, John Lewis, a dedicated tennis fan, is discussing yesterday's match between Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova. I wasn't very happy with that match-point decision.

"Neither was I," he agrees, shaking his head vigorously. He tugs down one sleeve of his soft cream suit, a cavalier handkerchief peeking from the lapel pocket. "I think Martina knew that the ball was good, in her heart of hearts."

In the cool and muted elegance of these surroundings — damask tablecloth, light crisp wines, Picasso prints on olive walls, the chatter of steel on fine china — the three members of the Modern Jazz Quartet are entirely at home. Their music might have been designed for such a setting, except it is usually too interesting to fall as dining-room Muzak. Some 35 years after the group's first records for Prestige, their durability is undiminished. It is incredible to think of it, but the MJQ might be currently making some of the best music of their career.

Connie Kay's drums and cymbals have seldom been more precise and in-the-pocket; Percy Heath's bass is still hearty and lightly-sprung, even in the simple lines he loves to play. Best of all, Milt Jackson is improvising with renewed alacrity. It was Jackson's declining interest which sapped the inner strength of the band in the early 70s, leading to the 1974 break-up: now he sounds wittier and more decisive than ever in his choice of notes.

John Lewis presides over the group with an authority that seems, to an outsider, to be reluctant and deferential. He is a rounded man with a still-handsome face that is always smiling: only his eyes decide whether the smile is amused or careworn. Although he grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he might as easily be a native of Provence. He has kept a house in that part of France for nearly 30 years, and with his love for J.S. Bach and J.M. Turner, his Yugoslavian wife and the hills and greenery of the old world, he is as close to European citizenship as an American jazzman will ever be.

WHEN THE Quartet reformed in 1981, their return as a recording unit was perhaps unremarkable. They were making albums for Norman Granz and Pablo, and while the records are decent enough — "I don't regret 'em," says Lewis — they were nostalgic rather than seeking any fresh achievement. With their return to Atlantic for *Three Windows*, Lewis insisted that he had

more he wanted to do with the Quartet yet — a scintillating meeting of the group and The New York Chamber Symphony Orchestra, in some of the pianist's most eloquent compositions. Now, with *For Ellington*, Lewis has confided that he has further inventions for the Quartet alone.

Ellington tribute albums have been tiresomely familiar for 14 years, but the MJQ's set is too reasoned and involving for such a dismissal. "Rockin' In Rhythm" and "It Don't Mean A Thing" are pieces which the composer himself was finally driven to parody, yet Lewis creates a different sort of momentum in each piece. The first moves through six new choruses before they get to the theme, while the altered times in the second replace the original jauntness with a deliberate stealth.

"The pieces that I wanted to do," he explains, when we have repaired to his Dorchester suite, "were the ones that you don't often hear at jam sessions or on other records. The reason is that they're really orchestral pieces. They're not just themes you improvise on — 'Jack The Bear' isn't that at all. The great attraction for me there was the use of the bass as a solo instrument — not just as an improvising instrument, but also as a new section all on its own. He had the brass and the saxes to use, and then the bass came along too."

Besides these, there is "Ko-Ko", "Sepia Panorama" and "Prelude To A Kiss" — "Ko-Ko" especially is a dynamic mounting for a complex piece. John's own "For Ellington" opens the record.

"It was a comment on how I understood he felt in his later days about some of the music he was involved in. In his last days he was tremendously concerned with his Sacred Concert music. I don't think that music is that successful, but what he wanted to do was use the religious feeling he found in Afro-American music. I'm old enough to know that the first things were spirituals, which grew out of English anthems, the first music that these transplanted people used for religious purposes. It became, after the development of jazz as we knew it, gospel music. That's what he was interested in. So I tried to start it as a quiet spiritual piece and turn it into a gospel piece. Milt Jackson's roots are in gospel music, which isn't all that old.

"We've worked on this music a long time. The beginning of the project was 'Rockin' In Rhythm', which was scheduled for a Pablo album, but we needed more time. I never really wanted it to be a single thing. Same way I didn't want 'Topsy' to be separate from a set of Basie things. Ellington and Basie tunes were really responsible for me being in music at all."



Their return to the Atlantic fold must be a prime cause for the group's new confidence. *For Ellington* is the first release on East-West, Nesuhi Ertegun's own pet label. The MJQ has strayed a couple of times from his guidance: they even turned up on The Beatles' Apple label for two records, both of which are now hard to find (Lewis notes, ruefully, that he had to pay \$35 for a copy of one of them when he found it missing from his collection). Nesuhi, though, knows him better than anyone.

"Yes, He basically lets me do whatever I want to do. It's almost as if it hadn't stopped. It all really started with Atlantic and Nesuhi in 1955. The Prestige sides, you know, were embryo things, but the serious Modern Jazz Quartet stuff was with Atlantic."

It's possible to disagree a little when one thinks of the Gershwin medley they did for Prestige, one of the loveliest ballad recordings in the music. But it's true that Atlantic has hosted all their greatest sessions.

"Atlantic really was Ahmet Ertegun's baby," muses Lewis, "and I don't know that he really follows jazz all that much. But Nesuhi and I have been friends a long time. He was living in Los Angeles and had a small record shop specialising in jazz for collectors, and we became friends. We have a few things in common. We both like to watch tennis. I wish I could play! We both like to play bridge. We enjoy good food and wine. Yesterday I spent going through London in the rain to buy these —"

He points to a couple of bottles on the mantelpiece — a good Burgundy, a fine Chardonnay. A gentleman's indulgence, which is fitting: John Lewis must be among the most considerate and courteous of men.

THE MJQ might have returned to reap the benefits of a new interest in acoustic music — they might, but it's unlikely. Their success has always been unlikely, remote from any other jazz trends. Lewis crystallised his ideas at a time when the main stream was moving towards the dark heat of hard bop. The MJQ entered concert-hall respectability when Lewis's peers in bebop piano were already drifting towards obscurity. While he applied his ideas about counterpoint and fugal forms, it was Dave Brubeck's European grooves that sounded cool. The MJQ's superb series of Atlantic records in the late 50s — *Fantasia*, *The Comedy*, *European Concert* — are still respected rather than loved. Although the group accrued a large, global audience, it was the prettiness of the MJQ which attracted most people, rather than the intense shaping of jazz forms.

The quietness and gravity of the group wasn't everything. They could play with a brisk attack when they wanted, and Lewis's own blues playing became deep and exacting. Their great talent, though, was and is to enunciate the stately, implacable structures which Lewis distills from a swing-to-bop inventory. For all his European "borrowings", it's the raw materials of jazz and blues which best inform the Quartet's music. The power of "Correge" or "Django" is at once delicate and elemental: the sensitivity is acute, the dynamics soft, but the starkness of the blues and the determination to swing still abide.

If *For Ellington* is proof of the Quartet's continuing vitality, the preceding *Three Windows* is a better example of Lewis's larger ambitions. Jazz-and-strings has been an unhappy marriage, but for once the writing here has a confluent attitude which refuses to denigrate either party. Part of the success seems to lie in the responsiveness of the orchestra — as if string players are finally learning to phrase in a jazz manner.

"There've been a lot of changes. They used to have older players who were trained in a certain condition, and they avoided listening to pop music of any kind. They couldn't do anything at all with that. With the proliferation of radio and recordings now, you can't escape listening to other music. No more ivory tower."

"Young string players have been attracted to jazz, and it wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for Svend Asmussen and Stephane and Jean-Luc Ponty. I wrote a commission for Kronos, for string quartet and piano. There are a lot of string quartets in America, and the big interest they have is in jazz, because the other music challenges them only technically. I guess they're bored with that."

Meantime, the pianist is going the other way. He's been recording Bach preludes — "I never had to practise so hard in my life" — and perform duets with his wife, who is a harpsichordist. As a blues player, the refinement of his touch and timing tends to mask an understanding as profound as that of the great pre-war players.

"My mother died when I was four, and I was raised by my grandmother, my great-grandmother and my aunt. When I was five or six, an itinerant blues player had come through town — I don't know how my aunt met him, but she brought him home. If my grandmother had been there, I don't think she'd have let him in the house. But he came in, and he played, and it left an indelible impression on me."

"One of the great experiences for me was listening to the early recordings of Muddy Waters. They're like somebody walking a tightrope. To me, they're perfect. All the time in the performances there was something that could've gone bad, or vulgar, or out of tune, but it didn't happen. That music's just as important to me as great performances of great Beethoven or Bach. To me that's one of the great cultural achievements."

John Lewis is a family man. When the MJQ split up in 1974, he was able to spend more time with them all, teaching near his apartment in New York, near to the mayor's residence. Now the Quartet is, well, hot again. But we're all a little older. At our lunch table, Percy Heath leans back in his chair and reflects a moment. Some of his fellow bassists have gone recently. He thinks sadly of Slam Stewart. Well, you're still with us, Percy. He doesn't seem much cheered. "For the time being, man," he says, and looks down at the fine bright tablecloth.

"As long as they want us," smiles John, asked about the future life of the MJQ. "It's kind of a phenomenon now. We see other musicians from our generation dying. Four of us are still here."

For Ellington was recently released as East-West 790 926-L. Many of the classic MJQ albums are still available on Atlantic.



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a stranger in the architecture



*The compositions
of Iannis Xenakis
are inseparable
from his skills
as an architect.*

*Brian Morton talks to "an ancient
Greek in the modern world".*

DIOGENES, twice-born. Almost all very great artists undergo a second birth, a moment at which they have been forced to contemplate or suffer in little their own end. One thinks of Dostoyevsky and the firing squad lowering their rifles, of Cervantes released from the pirates' dungeon, of Messiaen in Nazi internment, half dead of starvation, only nourished by the sound of birds.

For Iannis Xenakis, the moment came on New Year's Day, 1945, in Athens. The 23-year-old was a resistance fighter. With a perfect irony his group's name was "Lord Byron", for the occupiers of Greece at this point were not the defeated Germans or Italians, but the old defenders of Greek liberty, the British, their presence another Churchillian turnaround. Xenakis and his comrades were defending a block of houses when a mortar shell went off in front of them. Two of the partisans fell dead, one

decapitated. And Xenakis? He didn't tell this story to anyone for 35 years and until he granted an interview to the musician and musicologist Nouritza Matossian in 1980.

He lay in the ruined building, trying to shout. "A catastrophe. My palate was pierced, there were bits of blood, holes, my jawbone was broken. My left eye had burst. I was choking in my own blood and vomiting . . ." Rescued by a woman comrade called Mäkki (the name survives in Xenakis's daughter), he was patched up, spared the execution demanded for resistance-nationalist activity and, in the spring, sent back to his architecture studies at the Polytechnic, bitter, brutally scarred, monocular, never again to have a natural perception of depth. The face became an emblem of a riven country.

XENAKIS WAS actually born in Romania, in the seaport of Braila, of Greek-speaking parents who sent him to an Anglo-Scots school (hence the further irony of "Lord Byron", whose death at Missolonghi had been a shade more banal than the myth purported, rather more cosmetic than Xenakis's wounding). That lineage and his christening — "gentle stranger" — almost guaranteed him exile. By the autumn of 1947 he had made a perilous way to France where he quickly found work with another cyclops-genius, the architect Le Corbusier. (In her book, Ms Matossian offers one touching anecdote of the two one-eyed men double-checking whether the other has aligned the wine bottle for pouring.)

Had Xenakis never composed a note of the music for which he is now best known, he would still be remembered for some of his buildings. Further, some of the masterworks attributed to "Coebu" owed no more to him than the fact that they emerged from his atelier, just as many an Old Master is actually the work of a gifted apprentice working "in the style of . . .". There is a cliché that architecture is frozen music. Xenakis's buildings, like the Couvent de la Tourette and the Philips Pavilion at the Brussels Expo (a structure so superbly conceived that it all but defied demolition at the fair's end) are inseparable from the music he was beginning to write. They have the same concern with precise mathematical modulations and proportions, with mass in dynamic (but frozen) movement, with myriad quantitative changes slowly defining a music that is best considered in terms of architectural mass rather than dramatic motion.

Xenakis has a daunting critical reputation: austere, cerebral, "theoretical". The fact, though, is that he is first and foremost a craftsman (even, perhaps, an artisan). His works are built, made.



However overbearing the methodological façade, they can be lived in, very peacefully.

These days, the infamous scar has settled back into the landscape of the face. It's unsettling to meet him amid the brutal landscape of the South Bank and doubly so to find etched in the concrete wall opposite an image of Corbusier's famous revision of Vitruvius. The Modulor is a projected human form, scaled to the means required for architectural proportion. (Has it always been on that wall? If so, it stands as an ironic comment on a place where the architecture is almost unbearably inhumane and where skateboarders weave patterns round sleeping derelicts.)

Xenakis is in London to rehearse the London Sinfonietta in a new work. Loath to analyse *Warg* — "I am not a musicologist" — as he is to dissect or generalise anything he does, he none the less provides a dazzling *obligato* on the title's derivation: *org*, *uerg*,

ergonomics, the erg of physics, ancient Persian and Greek; it is a work that is also *about* work. With a little coaxing, he is willing to talk about his own work.

He pleads guilty to a little early obfuscation. "It's my fault. In the early pieces I insisted too much perhaps on the theoretical aspect, because it was very new and unfamiliar." The breakthrough pieces, between 1953 and 1956, were *Melissos* and *Prithipaktia*, both of them relatively short orchestral works (seven and nine minutes respectively) using Xenakis's "stochastic" method. "Stochastic" is a mathematical term meaning possibilities. It comes from the Greek word for target. The tossing of a coin, a thousand times or a billion, tends towards probability. This converging is the theoretical target and that is what these pieces do. Typically, though, the theoretical convergence is not pure theory but a metaphorical expression of natural occurrences, from the swarming of insects to the clotting of blood. All these actions follow the same probabilistic trajectory in which the behaviour of a single individual – whether it be a haemoglobin cell, a gnat, or a particle of musical information – is irrelevant; the only thing that can be clearly determined is the overall calculus of events.

IRONICALLY, if predictably, when Xenakis's works were first presented to professional orchestras, they were baffled by the disproportion between the simple motivic material and the incredible complexity of the whole piece.

"Thirty years ago, when they approached my music for the first time, it was really very different for the players. Each one was playing his own line and no more."

Sering players were suddenly being asked to play not stepwise notes and chords but long keening glides from one tone to the next, without trills or vibrato. That is still the most distinctive aspect of Xenakis's and the most readily imitated.

"In England, 15 or 20 years ago, it was terrible. In France now, there are no music critics; they are all interested in pop or in television." Even the charismatic socialist minister of culture Jack Lang soon turned to pop when he recognised the number of votes arrayed in front of him.

None the less, there has been a slow improvement in understanding, what Xenakis calls a "diffusion" and receptive "evolution". He no longer daunts as once he did. But is it still the case that some understanding of his compositional methods is necessary to appreciate his music?

"No, art can propose many things which are philosophical or scientific but the first contact has to be aesthetically interesting. If I see a beautiful sunset, I might afterwards go on to ask and explore why it has happened – planetary movement, orbit, the diffraction of light – but to begin with I simply say, How beautiful! That is true of music as well, though I didn't always know this."

- He has written almost no programmatic music. There are scores for the *Orestes* and *Medea*, and one dedication (of *Nuits*) to political prisoners but little of his work makes claims other than musical ones. He even argues that the mystic Catholicism espoused by his old teacher Olivier Messiaen is irrelevant to a

grasp of his music.

"You should not be stopped by that. Messiaen is such a complex figure that you should forget all about the religious approach. He is very sensual, in his music as in his life. His first wife went crazy or something and he married after a while a young pupil, a pianist called Yvonne Loriod; they are passionately in love, together. And this is a sin. And his music is a sin, too. It is also – also – very abstract in its scales, a very intuitive departure from the traditional scholarship into the realm of rhythmic, Indian, Greek, very pagan."

Xenakis, as befits an architect, has always been highly conscious of place and of spatial relationships. Years ago he directed a remarkable *son et lumière* in the desert. He has made substantial contributions to the field of utopias, a more exact science than wishful thinking. And he is particularly concerned, as a man who once described himself as "an ancient Greek in the modern world", with the relative positions of players and hearers.

He occasionally submits sketches to architectural competitions, like a recent Paris conservatory project, for the bulk of existing concert halls are a bad joke, bad acoustics and with a layout inflexibly committed to an 18th-century stage-and-alls plan.

"The ideal would be a concert hall that is pliable; the floor would move, the walls and ceiling. We should be able to change the space to suit the music but architecturally we can't do that, not for maybe fifty more years. There are inflatable structures already, but they are not so good for acoustics."

One of Xenakis's most characteristic tactics has been to distribute his players through the auditorium (another demand on their adaptability): this is the case as early as 1965 with *Terrakhor*, with *Nous Gannon* (1967), both big orchestral pieces, even in smaller ensembles like *Periapha* (1969) the six percussionists circle the audience. He has always worked at extremes: the 1970s saw a string of solo pieces analogous to Berio's *Sequenze*: there was *Euryali* (1973, piano), *Guttorb* (1974, organ), *Plappha* (1975, percussion), *Theraps* (1976, bass), *Mikka* "S" (1976, violin, a companion to the earlier *Mikka*). The following year, though, he produced *Jonchais* (1977) for a massive orchestra of 108 instruments.

Everything about Xenakis depends on time and place. The fall of the Greek colonels in 1974 meant that his death sentence was lifted and he could go "home"; he shows no signs of needing to.

"I live in Paris, but I don't live with Paris because I am so busy. I could almost say – why not? – that I have a citizenship of the world. When I am in Japan, I think like a Japanese, when I am in the US, I am American, here, like an Englishman. I don't think that I am tied to the earth."

DISCOGRAPHY

Mikka, *Mikka* "S", *Idhor*, etc. members of Arditi String Quartet – RCA RS 9009 RL 5444

Melissos, *Prithipaktia* (French) Chant du Monde LDX 78168

Nous Gannon Erato STU 9119

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PUSHING TO THE LIMIT

IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, THE
 SOUGHT-AFTER SIDEMAN AND LEADER
 SPEAKS OUT ON PLAYING POST-BOP

WHAT'S WITH the chicken?

"Oh, I've had it with airline food. I like to get my own stuff."

In one hour David Sanborn has to fly to Tokyo. So a whole toast chicken sits steaming in readiness for the trip. Be prepared.

If it's Wednesday, it must be . . . Sanborn isn't here to play, officially, although last night he turned up at Dingwalls to jam with Curtis Mayfield. Rumours that he would play with Prince at the giant's party, the day before, proved alas to be unfounded. He is cramming this talk in at the last possible moment. As always, David Sanborn is comprehensively in demand.

Saxophonists like to have a signature sound, but not many are as instantly recognisable as Sanborn. His alto tone is piercing, squeezed, needle-sharp: if you search for an "emotional" delivery, you'll find none more graphic than this. He sounds as if he's shuffling every note, twisting phrase ends as though trying to push them through a pinhole. Drama is a touchstone in Sanborn's art. He is a storyteller-player, as volatile as Cannonball, as quick and greasy as King Curtis. If he loves the scalding sound of post-bop masters like Phil Woods and Jackie McLean, he's equally in hock to R&B pugs such as Gil Berne and Junior Walker. In the end, it always sounds like Sanborn.

WORDS: His new record, *Close-Up*, is his toughest and smartest for years. Marcus Miller has produced everything with an edge as cutting as Sanborn's own. If ever music glistened with digital snap, this is it. Abetted by a crew of Miller-men such as Hiram Bullock, Ricky Peterson and Vinnie Colaiuta, plus the producer's own bass and keyboards, the album goes off like a rocket with "Slam" and stays up there. It's not mere radio music. Most of it is more brutal than the softer funk tracings which someone like Kenny G has mapped out for FM consumption. And while it is some distance from the avant-funk recipes brewed up by Laswell and friends, the harsh chatter of "Pyramid" and "Tough"

RICHARD

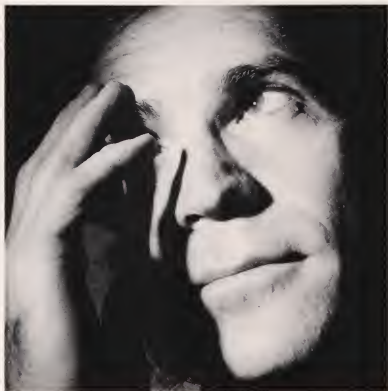
COOK

PHOTO:

STEVE

TYNAN

AND THE STRAIN
 OF GIVING IT EVERY-
 THING HE'S GOT



is too rigorous for background listening.

It's irresistible to ask if, following the reported discussion on sophisticated rock and contemporary jazz by Mike Steen and Steve Khan (*Wire* 49), Sanborn can grasp the fine line between those categories.

"They actually used those words!" he grins. "I suppose my music falls into a certain category. I guess a lot of the music I write and gravitate towards is more rhythmic, R&B-based stuff. More like rock and R&B than jazz. To me, that's what separates idioms, the rhythmic orientation. But because it's instrumental, and there's a certain amount of improvising, and some of the harmonies *can* be a little outside that, it gets called jazz by some people. I don't think that's correct."

IT'S POSSIBLE to hear *Close-Up* as formulaic, and short on the sort of identity a jazz session seeks to establish for itself. It's actually at its least impressive when it tries to do that – on "Same Girl" and "You Are Everything", overtly romantic pieces which the alto man can't find much to do with. But most of the LP is as personal as any *swamp* hard bop. It's far more entertaining than Coleman's *Virgin Beauty* – compared to the supercharged energy of Sanborn's music, Ornette's strain of global funk sounds fussy and mannered. The older man should be so lucky as to come up with a melody as good as "So Far Away".

It's compelling, too, to hear such an accomplished player overcoming the problems of the recording environment. In the airless, timeless space of the studio, Sanborn has to summon human reflexes and responses. On record, Miller's charts allow him only seconds to personalise his route, to slide in some once-only lick or run. A jazz parallel might be with the great Shorty Rogers sessions of the early 50s: in those skintight arrangements, the West Coasters were permitted only a few moments to make their improvisations in the wedge of the arrangement, and the discipline made albums like *Cool 'N Crazy* into superb jazz records.

"Yeah, it's a little weird sometimes. The whole overdub mode – you have to put yourself into a weird state of mind to do that stuff. It's a one-way street doing overdubs. You're reacting to something that's not reacting back, and it's a fixed kind of thing.

You can do it, but there's a subtle shift in how you approach it. Miles Davis says it's no different for him. But that's him. You miss the interaction of a band, and you tend to think a little differently, about constructing things – you tend to be more compositional. But it's supposed to be an improvised solo.

"What I do is, if I don't get it the first couple of takes, I'll drop it. I won't beat it to death. I'll come back the next day. It's pointless trying three or four times. I won't flog away at an overdub. I'll listen to the tune, but I won't be too premeditated."

Sanborn is probably still best-known for his many cameos as a sessionman. After many years of being a roadband sideman, records like David Bowie's *Young Americans* and Garland Jeffreys's *One-Eyed Jack* gave him an enormous, if unwitting audience. His sovereign presence in such music helped to define a particular era in record-making. But, he says, the impression was misleading.

"It seemed as if I was doing a lot of sessions, but I think it was that the ones I did had a high visibility. To me, a studio musician is a guy who's in the studio every day, ten in the morning till whenever. I knew a lot of guys like that, though that happened more in the 70s than now. I never did that. If I wasn't on the road, I did maybe seven or eight sessions a month. But if four of the records were on the radio, people might say, hey, this guy's all over the place!

"Primarily, I've been on the road for 20 years. I started out with Butterfield in '67, played with him for four years, played with Stevie Wonder for two years, with David Bowie for a year, The Rolling Stones, James Taylor, James Brown, Rickie Lee Jones. Plus my own band."

DAVID SANBORN is a slight, rather frail-looking man. In repose he seems studious and retiring, but when he talks his manner is suddenly alert and penetrating. His hands look small, the fingerbones protruding, and one is reminded of what he went through as a child.

Struck by polio at the age of three, he spent a long period in an iron lung, and was paralysed after that. At the age of 11, his doctors counselled his parents that David should take up a wind instrument to help him with regulating his breathing. "At the

time," he remembers, "there was a lot of Ray Charles on the radio." The scouring power of rhythm and blues was what he loved. But it must have been a gruelling matter for a young man with breathing problems. Is he ever bothered now by the physical effort of playing the saxophone?

"Sometimes, when I'm really tired, I stay in shape by swimming. I try to find a pool on the road, and when I'm home in New York I swim half a mile a day. If I play the same day as I fly in an aeroplane, it's hard. I'm a little bit more sensitive to that kind of stuff than other people."

It *always* sounds like the playing is hard.

"I'm pushing to the limit, that's why. I know saxophone players who play *loud*, and I don't play nearly as loud as half the guys I know. I focus the sound and I put an edge on it, but in terms of sheer volume it's not really that loud. I go right up into the mike."

And the use of very high, false registers?

"Well, I started out doing that as a result of playing with other electric instruments. Sometimes that's the only thing that cuts through. You can't really play if everybody's jammed, and you're building a solo, and all of a sudden you get WHOOF! Swamped by all this electric volume. You go up to your upper register to cut through, because it'll match the level of intensity of the other instruments. Anyway, I hear things up there. The alto sax can be like a violin."

In order to do battle, has he ever tried electric saxophones?

"I'm not really drawn to those instruments. I like the acoustics of the saxophone. I don't get a physical pleasure out of playing the lyricon or the EWI. It's hard enough for me to play the sax, in all honesty. I haven't found one of those instruments that I can develop enough of a personality on."

"I had a lyricon for a while and it would short out. I'd be playing it and it would drop an octave, or some notes would short out. The imperfection of the saxophone is the way it changes according to temperature and humidity and stuff. Because it has a piece of wood that soaks up moisture, and that's where the sound is generated. If you're playing in a room that's 60 degrees as opposed to 85 degrees, the sound is going to be a lot different. That kind of unpredictability is less random than something that shorts out."

SANBORN'S "STRAIGHT" jazz appearances have been rare. It's really only his work with Gil Evans that's allowed him the scope of extended improvising in what is at least a variation on traditional jazz surroundings.

"I enjoyed it. I stopped playing with Gil a little over a year ago because I was always working with my own band and he had to hire subs when I wasn't there."

Any doubts as to Sanborn's ability to sustain his playing must be dispelled by *Priestess*, where his improvisations and section-work often grant the music a concerto-like flavour. It would have been fascinating if Evans had ever found the time to compose for Sanborn the way he once did for Cannonball Adderley. It's notable that his replacement in the Evans band, Chris Hunter, is almost a Sanborn disciple. Is there a genuine rivalry between saxophonists?

"I think so — a healthy competitiveness. Some of it can be negative, some people are real fuckin' nasty. Do I check people out? Absolutely. As long as I can go on the road and support myself and make records, I don't care if there's a thousand sax players out there. The more the better. I can only think of a few players I'd want to hear all the time. Joe Henderson and Wayne Shorter are two people I could probably listen to endlessly."

"One good thing that's happening in the record business is that there's a wider variety of high-quality recorded music which seems to be available. There's a lot of good players who haven't really hit their stride yet. You can hear a new music developing."

Something to come after jazz?

"Well, a part of the continuum, a little further down the line. There was a definite re-examination of the earlier forms like bebop and post-bop which needed to be explored again. A lot of players have gone through the schooling of understanding that — it's like 40 or 50 years ago, except people learned it then by going on the road and playing it."

"It's interesting that the post-bop sensibility has come back, because I don't think you can get locked into that. You go through the harmonic, rhythmic and melodic layers, but where you take it then — that's what's interesting."

Where will David Sanborn take it next? Well . . . Tokyo.

Close-Up is out now on Reprise.

JAZZ ON RECORD - A HISTORY

by Brian Priestley
(Elus Tree Books, £12.95)

THE ROLLING STONE JAZZ RECORD GUIDE

Edited by John Svenson
(Random House/Rolling Stone Press, £5.95)

THE GUIDE can scarcely fail; dig in, cross refer, hop from entry to entry endlessly and addictively. Half the fun is disagreeing with the experts. As it happens there is little I'd quarrel with in the individual entries; even where I'd make a different assessment of an artist I'd say the pieces here, arranged alphabetically by the musicians' names, represent reasonable and tunable judgements.

My reservations relate to the book's overall design. Although it has value as a reference book on artists and their recorded output, its usefulness as a guide to available albums is slim for readers outside the USA, and it is already three years old. In fact some of the entries appeared in the *R.S. Record Guide* in 1979 and it looks suspiciously as if they haven't been updated.

I hope it's not jingoistic to be concerned about the apparently systematic neglect of European and African musicians. Those, like Dave Holland, Abdullah Ibrahim, Tere Montoliu, George Shearing and Michel Urbaniak

who have made their names in an American context are mentioned, but even on this basis John Tchicai should qualify, and surely the likes of Brecker, Brutzmann, Gancelin, Mangelsdorff, Namyskowski, Derek Bailey, Barry Guy, Evan Parker, Chris McGregor, Dudu Pukwana, John Surman and Joe Harriott rate a mention.

Brian Priestley is at pains to point out that his book is a history of jazz on record, rather than of jazz. It might be more accurate to describe it as a history of the recording industry's treatment - mistreatment - of jazz, treatment which has hardly improved. Other writers have dealt with the entrepreneurs' swindling of the artists, be it over control of their work, copyright, royalties or whatever. Priestley's is probably the most comprehensive survey of the subject, and one which is likely to be best heartfelt given that Priestley is a musician.

Although he says he does not set out to trace the history of jazz as such it is unavoidable that, if only in passing, he should give an outline of its development, but tyros should not look to this book for a clear picture of how the genre(s) evolved. The different schools are treated in a rather modular fashion, and although he does interrelate the different styles, someone without existing knowledge would find it hard to deduce the organic growth of the music from spasm and ragtime to fusion and harmonologies.

I cannot recall a book I read when first investigating jazz that did not accord rhythm and the rhythm section a crucial and central

role in the changes which have occurred in the music, yet Priestley makes the surprising claim that fans and writers have conspired to ignore the role of rhythm. This claim leads him to introduce some intrusive comments, as if to reinstate the role of rhythm, and to use such phrases as "the *currently* ambivalent relationship" (my italics) between the horns and the rhythm section. He does, though, have some enlightening things to say on Armstrong's approach to the beat and Ornette's "harmonic rhythm".

Despite these quibbles, as an exposure of the problems musicians face on the business (as opposed to artistic) front *Jazz On Record* should be read by anyone with more than a passing interest in jazz, not least for the picture it gives of the plight of independently-minded artists attempting to get their work properly presented.

BARRY WITHERDEN

STORMS OF THE HEART

Edited by Kirsti Ounin
(Camden Press, £12.95)

VOICES OF NEGRITUDE

by Julio Finn
(Quartet, £14.95)

POSTMODERNISTS have proclaimed the collapse of cultural identity and the end of hierarchical boundaries between art and life - issues already familiar to Black artists for whom such notions never made sense in the first place. Documenting the interplay of culture and politics that underpins the contemporary Black arts scene in Britain, *Storms of The Heart* offers a rejoinder to postmodern pessimism. It shows that what is really "new" is the emergence of a generation of Asian, African and Caribbean artists, living or born in Britain, who have emerged in the post-riots scenario of the 80s to assert a Black identity, forcing its way out of the margins with grace and beauty.

Across a range of media - from music, poetry and painting to architecture, film,



video and photography – this opens up new vantage points on the predicament of identity by exploring the possibilities of a distinct Black aesthetic, a diasporic sensibility. The book is not a survey and would not claim to be totally representative, yet it captures the militant activism of artists grappling with the expression of a Black British identity. Whether this is found in the vibrant image-text collage of Sonia Boyce or Keith Piper; Owusu's celebratory poetics of Notting Hill Carnival; Ben Okri's insights on *Orbello* or Gail Thompson's numinous compositions and collaborations, what emerges is not homogeneity or stereotypical "protest art" but an open-ended struggle with languages and codes which have been instrumental in the marginalisation of blackness in the West. The diversity appears eclectic, but it is driven by the renewal of this perennial problem of identity in a world where blackness is defined only as difference, as otherness, as alien.

Such questions confronted the poets and politicians of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. DuBois re-discovered the "souls of black folk" in the music and song of an oral tradition transplanted into the hostile landscape of the modern world. The search for the essence or spirit of blackness set the Negritude movement in motion in Paris during the 30s; it then spread to the Americas (north and south) and the Caribbean in the 40s. However, Julio Finn's introductory account, *Voices Of Negritude*, fails to address the complex interaction between black intelligentsia and their dual inheritance from Europe and Africa. Through simplistic polarisations, Finn obscures the fundamental question of the Negritude movement, namely: how to express an authentic self in a language imposed by colonial oppression?

By ignoring the syncretic dimension – the appropriation of Western modernism and its synthesis with the ancestral past – the parallels between Negritude and the contemporary rebirth of the Black arts in the diaspora are lost. Paradoxically, it was through the language of their masters that colonial artists conceived a Pan-African identity that symbolised resistance and liberation. Here, in post-colonial Britain, there is much that the

younger Black British artists can learn from the Negritude movement (how to avoid an overly romanticised view of Africa, for a start).

And for anyone with an interest in the arts, there is much to be learned from the Black diaspora where some of the sharpest assessments of the problems of modernity – such as jazz – have produced particularly intense pleasures, with or without the security of a coherent identity.

KOBENA MERCER

**THE RECORDING ANGEL:
MUSIC, RECORDS AND
CULTURE FROM ARISTOTLE
TO ZAPPA**

by Erwin Eisenberg
(Penguin, £3.95)

NO UNCERTAINTIES with this Eisenberg. *The Recording Angel* is a dazzlingly confident account. Far from the usual Frankfurt-laden jeremiad about the mechanisation of art, it suggests that the advent of recording technology actually set music free of time and space. What Adorno and Benjamin had pessimistically identified as another opiate administered in escalating doses by an unfeelingly manipulative industrial-cultural complex emerges here (a point borne somewhere in Marcuse, who rates only a fleeting reference) as a grounds for liberation of a new sort.

The first ground of scholarship is collection

and, Eisenberg quotes Benjamin, pure whimsy. He opens with the story of Clarence, a bum in a coldwater shack out on Long Island who eats beans out of tins, has crap backing up in his toilet, and, stacked round the room (in the oven, even), every old Beunswick they ever made: *Shall We Dance*, *A Damsel In Distress*, George and Ira singing "Dawn Of A New Day".

Before records, it was not possible to take possession of music. Even with relatively stringent copyright and reproduction laws a mass public tends to wrest the work away from its creator. Mozart, commissioned by his mysterious nemesis, was still able to make the *Requiem* his own – in both senses. Epochs can be dated to suit any purpose but some seem more significant than others. Brahms was probably the first major composer to hear his own work on commercial record. Ever after, music was a business and an industry and musicians shafted their ground and status accordingly.

Juxtapositions of high and low culture are always uncomfortable – we haven't yet quite recovered from Charles A. Reich's notorious elevation of Cream to Mozart status, Procul Harum to Bach (the fact that Reich couldn't spot a pastiche should have alerted us to a tin ear) – and there is a bulge of tongue in Eisenberg's cheeky subtitle. The fact remains that he handles such transitions with almost arrogant ease. Despite a self-consciously racy tone and conversational, almost throwaway style, he has managed to condense some of the major cultural debates of the last few hundred years and, in doing so, to rescue "mechanical reproduction" from the debased or (after Warhol) nihilistic depths to which it had fallen.

The traditional Marxist view was that mechanical music mimicked the repetitive reified nature of an alienated society. However true that may be or may have been, Eisenberg allows us to make a further distinction, the only one that matters. Bad art is bad art, repetition only increases the badness exponentially. Only by repetition, though, does good art reveal itself. Nothing ever prevails in a day, or in 2m 45sec.

BRIAN MORTON



LITTLE BIG HORN

The Booker most prized by jazz fans is trumpeter Booker Little. Andy Hamilton reflects on "the last figure in an ill-fated trumpet tradition".

DOWNBEAT DATED 9 November 1961 carried a report that ex-Benny Goodman/Tommy Dorsey trumpet star Ziggy Elman has appeared in a Los Angeles court to face a maintenance suit filed by his wife. He's fallen on hard times. "You are known as the world's leading trumpeter!" asks Ruby Elman's attorney. "Lots of people think I am," Ziggy modestly replies, "but I still can't get much work." He has seven separate bank accounts; six of them contain sums of between \$1.19 and \$11. The seventh, he confesses, is overdrawn.

In the same issue of *Downbeat*, however, is a modest obituary of another trumpet player who at the time of his death might well have deserved the epithet applied to Elman. The obituary – of Booker Little – is headed "A Talent Cut Down – A Promise Unfulfilled".

Booker had suffered for some time from what had been diagnosed as arthritis, which affected his right hand and made playing difficult. However, during the final year of his life, pain caused by the onset of kidney disease meant that he had to pace his playing carefully. In early October 1961 he was admitted to hospital in a "serious condition" and on the fifth of that month he died. "Uræmia" is usually given as the cause of death but in fact this is the condition of blood-poisoning which is the final stage of kidney failure. Booker Little was 23. Even in the short span of artistic creativity allotted to him, however, he achieved enough to render the *Downbeat* judgement too bleak. His promise, though given little enough time to develop, was far from "unfulfilled".

"MUSICAL" is the only description I've been able to find of the family Booker Little was born into in April 1938, in Memphis, Tennessee – on the Mississippi halfway between the two jazz centres of New Orleans and Kansas City. At the age of five, records his friend Nat Hentoff, he "experimented unsuccessfully" with his father's trombone. He later tried clarinet, but only hit on trumpet when he was at high school. This was Manassas High in Memphis, which seemed to have quite a musical tradition – Jimmie Lunceford taught there in the 1920s, where he formed the "Chickasaw Syncopators" before going on the road. While at Manassas, Booker became close friends with Frank Strozier, and another tenor player, George Coleman, also attended.

In 1955, at the age of 17, Booker and his friend Frank Strozier enrolled at the Chicago Conservatory of Music, where the aspiring trumpeter studied theory, composition and orchestration as well as his own instrument. His two-year training, at the end of which he received a B. Mus. degree, puts him into the more tutored section of the jazz community and it's clear that

both in playing and composition he reflected a lot on his craft. Hentoff writes: "Booker had a rare capacity . . . to be thoroughly lucid about what he was doing without his exceptional intelligence getting in the way of his emotions when he was actually bringing the music into being."¹

In 1958 Sonny Rollins introduced him to Max Roach, and so began a collaboration which was vital to Booker's short career. It's clear that in Little the non-pareil percussionist found a thoughtful, sensitive partner who made a promising successor to Clifford Brown – and whose career, with tragic irony, would follow the same pattern.

Booker made his first recording in Chicago, under the drummer's leadership, then later in 1958 moved to New York where he played with the Roach ensemble and began freelancing. In 1959 and 1960 he played with John Coltrane and Mal Waldron, and recorded with Frank Strozier and Teddy Charles. He also led a date with Tommy Flanagan, Scott La Faro and Roy Haynes now reissued as *The Legendary Quartet Album*, and still recorded with Max Roach (the famous *Freedom Now Suite*).

But 1961 was the year of Booker's most sustained artistic creation – and a year he did not survive. He was a member of the orchestra on the John Coltrane *Africa Brass* sessions. More important, the second vital collaboration of his career came to fruition – with Eric Dolphy. The two were much attuned in their musical thinking. In 1960 Booker had participated in the saxophonist's *Fat Cry* session. But in March 1961, the Candid date with Dolphy (*Out Front*) revealed a great step forward in the trumpeter's composing and arranging abilities. Then in July came a two-week engagement at The Five Spot in New York. This "musty-dusty" Greenwich Village cellar, whose jazz policy was inaugurated by proprietor Joe Termini when, as he put it, he grew tired of playing Scabble behind the bar with his artist customers, was the venue for many famous sessions. On record, though, the magical partnership of Little and Dolphy is matched only by the Monk/Coltrane session. The three LPs' worth recorded on the night of 16 July 1961 mark the apogee of Booker Little's career. His final album, from August or September 1961, is another composing and arranging effort in which Memphis colleague George Coleman takes the place of Dolphy.

WHAT IS Booker Little's place in the development of modern jazz? Gary Giddins offers a sane assessment when he writes that Little was "the last figure in an ill-fated trumpet tradition which began with Fats Navarro, who died at 26, reached full maturity with Clifford Brown, killed at 25, and was being extended into new areas by Little when he died in 1961 at 23".² Booker himself expressed a particular admiration for Kenny Dorham, but the connection with Clifford Brown is often



noted. It extends to their characters too – each was stable, dependable and “straight” as far as drugs were concerned.

But as regards their playing, the clear, full tone, effortless security across all registers and compelling melodic conception are the hallmarks of the mature work of both trumpeters. The reputation of each has risen since their early deaths, so that it’s now generally recognised that Clifford’s only peer in modern jazz is Gillespie himself. And we can now also see that the loss of Booker was just as tragic. Of all the trumpeters following Clifford Brown in developing the language of bop – Freddie Hubbard with his flashier, brassier style, Ted Curson, Lee Morgan – it’s Booker who stands out as the truest original.

If the fire and brilliance of the trumpeter’s conception come from Clifford, the spirit is a kindred one to Eric Dolphy’s, who was also working in the “new areas” referred to by Giddins. That affinity led to a plangency and bitter-sweetness not to be found in the work of the earlier trumpeter.

It’s an affinity less evident in Booker’s earlier recordings too. With a solitary unremarkable exception these (up to early 1960) are all with the Max Roach ensemble. If you agree that the inclusion of Ray Draper’s tuba is often ludicrous in its effect, and George Coleman isn’t your favourite tenor player, then these won’t fully satisfy. In the 1958 recordings Booker hasn’t yet achieved maturity; his improvisations are not lucid and he favours strings of alternately-accented eighth notes. This rhythmic monotony was something which he, unlike Dolphy, rapidly and completely overcame, and by the time of *The Many Sides Of Max Roach* (autumn 1959) his tone is full and pure and his melodic conception fully formed. This album is the first fully satisfying one on which Booker played – and Roach has finally abandoned the tuba and replaced Ray Draper with trombonist Julian Priester.

Booker’s later recordings under Max Roach’s leadership all feature the drummer’s then-wife, singer Abbey Lincoln. The



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best-known of these is *We Insist! The Freedom Now Suite*. Your attitude to these recordings might be affected by what you think about overt political messages in jazz (as opposed to the implicit ones which free self-expression contains).³ Less well-known but just as good is the later *Straight Ahead*, notable for some impassioned late playing by Coleman Hawkins and Little arrangements. *Percussion Bitter Sweet* comes teplete (or overloaded) with Latin percussion but has fine playing by Dolphy, Clifford Jordan and Booker himself.

However, by the time of the first of these later recordings Booker Little's affinity with Dolphy was becoming clear, and the dissonant idiom of his maturity can first be heard clearly on *Fantastic Frank Strazzer* (now reissued as *Waltz Of The Demons*) early in 1960. There it stands out against the more conservative hard-bop style of the other players – for instance, over the fairly routine changes of Strazzer's "Starling's Theme". Booker, reflective musician that he was, explained his ideas in a 1961 *Metronome* interview.⁴ It's important to understand what he was driving at here.

Booker says he likes lots of "dissonance". People often use "dissonant" to mean "sounds horrible (to me)" but in fact music without any dissonance can be totally boring. Most people quite like a B played against a C chord of C, E and G. A D added on top would be OK; but Booker or Dolphy might play a D flat or an A flat. They're still (unlike what Ornette Coleman was doing) playing on chord progressions, but as Booker says, "I can't hear any notes as being wrong" (in relation to the chords). Dolphy in a 1960 interview is more lucid: "I think of my playing as tonal. I play notes that would not ordinarily be said to be in a given key, but I think of them as proper . . . every note I play has some reference to the chords of the piece." The common approach of these musicians contrasts with the way Ornette was abandoning playing on chord progressions altogether. Booker said: "I have more conventional ideas of what makes what than he does, but I think I understand clearly what he's doing, and it's good . . . I'm interested in freedom, but I have respect for form." The contrast is one between two clear lines of development in modern jazz – a restricted and a less restricted freedom.

Booker also says that he uses notes that are not in the ordinary (diatonic) scales at all (they're in the cracks between the keys on the piano): "There's more emotion than can be expressed by notes . . . outside of the conventional diatonic way of playing . . . Say it's a B flat, but you play it flat and it's not an A and it's not a B flat, it's between them." Well, all jazz players "bend" notes (unless they're pianists). But Booker isn't as thorough-going in his pitch flexibility as, say, violinist Billy Bang with his use of quarter-tones.

THE FIRST date with Dolphy is the latter's *Far Cry* (December 1960) with the superlative rhythm section of Jaki Byard, Ron Carter and Roy Haynes. The album features probably the finest version of Dolphy's excellent composition

"Miss Anne". Altogether more ambitious and difficult is Booker's own *Out Front* session on Candid (recently reissued by Black Lion). This is his most adventurous compositional effort. The characteristic harmonies are inflected with a lot of dissonance, and so the arrangements often have a doleful air. Numbers like "Moods In Free Time" with Booker's declamatory trumpet over the throbbing ululations of Dolphy and the other horns, are suffused with melancholy – and really there's a need for brighter passages by way of contrast.

It's the extensive recordings from the Five Spot engagement which are the most important legacy of the partnership. Booker was less "outside" in his improvising than in his composing, and despite the affinity mentioned earlier, there's a contrast between Dolphy's angular, voluble yet intensely vocal style and the trumpeter's more obviously melodic and lyrical sweep. And always there's that melancholic edge to his playing. The rhythm section on the date is exceptional – Richard Davis, Ed Blackwell and Mal Waldron, who copes heroically with the erratic Five Spot piano.

Most of the numbers are originals by band members, including probably the finest, Dolphy's "Number Eight (Lotsa Posa)". "Booker's Waltz", allegedly by Dolphy, turns out to be an all-purpose waltz theme by Booker which appears, at varying tempos, as the title-track of *Waltz Of The Demons*, and as "The Grand Valse" on *The Legendary Quartet Album*. Most of the Five Spot tracks have been collected together as *The Great Concert Of Eric Dolphy*, but there are two additional tracks on the Dolphy double album *Status* (both collections Prestige) – "Status Seeking" and Dolphy's remarkable tour de force on solo bass clarinet, "God Bless The Child".

THE ALBUMS which Booker Little made without either of his two major collaborators include a delightful Teddy Charles date *New Directions*, which features the impassioned playing of Booker Ervin and arrangements by the vibraphonist which compare with his superb mood-fantasy "Nature Boy" with Miles Davis. *Victory And Sorrow*, Booker's last date, is a compositional effort which, like *Out Front*, uses varying tempos and metres. It's better, though, as its melancholy is tempered with less enervating moods. But it is *The Legendary Quartet Album* with Tommy Flanagan and Wynton Kelly alternating on piano, a virtuosic Scott La Faro, and Roy Haynes, which provokes Booker's finest solo work from any context.

This is a quite exceptional album which should appear in any list of the essential jazz records. It's notable for five outstanding Little originals (plus, unusually, the Bricusse/Newley number "Who Can I Turn To?"). But the real purpose of the album is to showcase Booker's improvising – and as Richard Williams comments in his sleeve-note, he is "shown here to be one of the greatest trumpet soloists in all jazz".

Minor keys predominate, but so do quicker tempos, and the bitter-sweetness is transformed into something greater. "Minor

Booker Little

Sweet" is an uninterrupted tour de force of controlled power and unflagging invention, and other titles very nearly attain its stature. It is impossible, when hearing these wonderful performances, not to be moved by the tragic vision which produced them and which was itself so tragically extinguished. They are the most perfect in a small but precious legacy.

Notes

¹ Obituary in *Metronome*, December 1961.

² Sleeve note to Eric Dolphy/Ron Carter: *Magna*.

³ See Introduction to Josef Skvorecky: *The Bass Saxophone* (Picador).

⁴ Quoted in D.C. Hunt's interesting article "Booker Little", *Jazz And Pop*, February 1969.

COMPLETE DISCOGRAPHY

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ERIC DOLPHY: FAR CRY (on Dolphy/Ron Carter: *Magic Prestige HB 6057*) December 1960

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MAX ROACH: PERCUSSION BITTER SWEET (*Impulse AS8*) August 1961

VICTORY AND SORROW (*Affinity AFF 124*) August or September 1961

(There are fuller details in Malcolm Walker's *Discography, Jazz Monthly* July 1966.)

Many thanks to Chris Clark of the National Sound Archive and Graham Langley of the British Institute of Jazz Studies for help with research.

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SOUNDCHECK

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September songs from BOB THE TUBA, HANK THE CELLO, and DEREK IN THE KITCHEN. Plus, the HEAVENS UNCAGED, CLUSTERS of CLARINETS, COLUMNS of CDs, a MORRIS MARINA and the SLOWEST ALTO of them all!

BOB STEWART FIRST LINE (JMT 880 014)

Recorded: New York, November 1987

First Line, C.J.; Metamorphosis, Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherfucker Child, Noat, Hey Mama, Besh Besh, Saravali, Hassav
Stewart (tuba), Stanton Davis (tr), Steve Turre (tb, conch), Kelynn Bell (pf), Idris Muhammad (d).

THE TUBA comes full circle and beyond. One of jazz's earliest instruments, it has been largely out of favour since the string bass became the music's main anchor. Reinstated as a contemporary agent by Red Callender in the 50s, its renaissance continues. Already successfully integrated as a bass and soloing instrument into groups led by composers such as Mingus, Gil Evans, Carla Bley and Taj Mahal, it seems highly appropriate to these myriad musical times that Bob Stewart, one of the tuba's finest practitioners, should now record as leader.

Assembling fellow Brass Fantasists Stanton Davis and Steve Turre on trumpet and trombone, ex-Defunktio xeman Kelynn Bell on guitar and one of jazz's most consistently excellent players, Idris Muhammad, on drums, Stewart has hit upon an excitingly different line-up. Bell is the perfect inclusion for he instantly dispels any planned-down Brass Fantasy comparisons, his funk rhythm guitar work adding an almost JB's edge to the set. Such a formula also places greater emphasis on the drummer for inventive support and Muhammad is more than equal to it; throughout the album's changing moods the interest never wavers.

The material is similarly imaginative and unlikely. Most strikingly modern are the title track and Arthur Blythe's "Metamorphosis"; two punchy, biting, immediately attractive tunes on which fast, metallic scratches are repeated and twisted with hammering effect. Stewart's work on the latter also has a shiny brilliance to it; his solo and walking bass lines flow with a pocket trumpet-like agility.

Three traditional compositions create further collisions. "Hey Mama" marches past you on its pilgrimage to New Orleans while "Suri-nam" is a pumping calypso on which Steve Turre plays a Haitian shell and Stanton Davis's solo perfectly captures the sunny vivacity of the piece. Yet "Sometimes I Feel . . ." Stewart's multiphonic solo spot, has a dignified, genuinely melancholic ambience, his final finger-

ing notes containing a startlingly resonant purity, like that of a howled double bass.

A record of traditions and extensions. An essential guide; the past and the future on two sides.

PHILIP WATSON

WAYNE HORVITZ/BUTCH MORRIS/ ROBERT PREVITE NINE BELOW ZERO (Sound Aspects SAS 014)

Recorded: New York, January 1986

3 Places In Southern California, Now Below Zero, Glory, If Only, Record Me (9) You, The Dancer, After All These Years, Three Strides, Revue
Morris (t, mrm), Roland (d mch), DX7, Horvitz (p, RX d mch), Previte (p, mrm, d), Roland (d mch, DX7)

ICE BURNS TOO. Freezing steals water just as



well as fire. The Antarctic is a desert also. And Morris can play a corner that's as parched and eerily bulbous as anything Miles scraped out over the charred abyssal funk of *Big Fun*. For Horvitz, petrifying influences (rather than presiding spirits) would be Richard Teitelbaum and George Lewis' composer (Teitelbaum's simple mental cousin); his rolling pattern-repeats are spiked by randomised decay, tinkling dying falls, odd swells and clatters. Previte's timekeeping is shadowy, more to do with hinting at the regularities and repetitions that are being avoided than anything tempo-affirmative.

Horvitz composes the bulk of the material here, but the naturally dominating classical drag of keyboard play is broken up as it folds back on itself, and Previte and Morris provide a crackling, uneasy quantum space for it to

sound into. This music, icy, precise, sparse and entropic, is really setting up a meeting between Horvitz's potent second-generation minimalist composition and rigorous Knitting Factory three-man improv.

It's a strong set, with a sarcastic edge to some of the formations and an overall variety that was missing from his Elektra/Nonesuch outing *The New Generation*. Horvitz isn't the new Glass, of course, because anything that allows room for fleshly (or machine) error is always going to make a music that's provisional, exploratory, more perilous than packageable.

A trio with a reputation and a clear 80s identity who understand the value of the gaps in communication, the wind-down of static as well as the wind-up of message. It's 60 below already, and things are looking up, are they not?

MARK SINKER

KENNY WHEELER QUINTET FLUTTER BY, BUTTERFLY (Soul Note 121 146-1)

Recorded: Milan, 26 and 27 May 1987

Everybody's Saxy But My Own, We Salute The Night, Abold Man, Flutter By, Butterfly, Gigolo, The Little Fella

Kenny Wheeler (fltn, c), Stan Sulzmann (ss, ts, fi), John Taylor (p), Dave Holland (b), Billy Elgar (d).

RENOWNED AS an ultra-perfectionist, Kenny Wheeler can rarely have come as close to matching his ideals as he does on *Flutter By, Butterfly*. This is a lovely record, not just for the flawless playing but particularly for the way his compositions sound so much more accessible here: a case of the right musicians in the right place at the right time? Always well crafted, his writing on previous LPs had, to my ear, a hermetic quality which I could admire but which often left me more bemused than enthused. In contrast, *Flutter By, Butterfly* is relaxed, friendly, less fiercely studious; it proffers confirmation that Wheeler is now as personal a presence in modern jazz composition as he has long been in its performance.

I had started to wonder. This is his first LP as leader for four years; his popularity as a sideman may help to pay the bills, but does it help the evolution of his own music? More, an eclectic past which saw him apparently as happy in the airy abstractions of the Braxton Quartet as in the churning thump of the United Jazz + Rock Ensemble could signal

shiftless vagary as much as hard-fought versatility. Did he *have* a music to call his own?

This album stills the doubts. It has a bight air of self-confidence; the feel of a man celebrating what he likes to do, and what he knows he can do well. Within a general ambience that could perhaps be termed English Romantic Impressionism Wheeler creates many subtleties of mood – the light-handed pastoral of "Flutter By", a coolly rhapsodic "We Salute The Night", "Mould Man's" off-hand jauntness, Mike Hennessey's sleeve notes refer to Wheeler's "wistful, yearning sound" and the same feelings are threaded through his writing; the album falters only when he moves into less apposite emotional terrain, on the right-tipped tango-parody "Gigolo" and a rather chirpy "Little Fella".

Taylor and Sulzmann have recorded half of these tracks on a previous duo album, and the musicians are all well known to each other (possibly excepting Elgart), so there is a rich familiarity to their interplay, all five sound utterly at home. To a travelling sideman, such as Wheeler has been in recent years, this sense of a homecoming must be gratifying; whatever the reason, there is a hint of glee, of gambol, to his playing which I haven't detected before.

Long without honour or profit in this country, Wheeler is now acknowledged as one of the finest trumpeters in jazz. On *Flutter By*, *Butterfly* he shows why, and throws in some fresh colours too. Since he's fond of wordplay, let's just say horn takes wing and flowers a gnu.

GRAHAM LOCK

JOHN CAGE
ÉTUDES BOREALES (1978)/RYOANJI
(1983)

(Mode 1 & 2)

Recorded, 14 July, 14 September 1984

Isabelle Ganz (mezzo-soprano), Frances-Marie Uteri (cl), Michael Pugliese (p)

ATLAS ECLIPTICALS (WITH WINTER MUSIC)

(Mode 3-6)

Recorded (live) Cornish Institute, Searle, 11 December 1983

The New Performance Group: Thomas Eckert (p); Ella Gray (vi); Walter Gray (cl), Matthew Kocumenski (perc), James Knapp (tr); Ben-Chung Lam (p), Roger Nelson (p), Jarrod Powell (perc), Julian Presser (tn), William O. Smith (cl), Paul Taub (tr)

Mr CAGE doesn't listen to his own records. Ever. He tells the story of arriving at a Beverly Hills cocktail party – an unlikely setting, if you ask me, but I'm only retailing this – to hear wafting through from a back room some of the most beautiful music he'd ever heard. Despite a life-long distaste for the recorded article, he asked his hostess what they were listening to. Her jaw dropped. You got it. Very Zen indeed.

Cage's diffidence doesn't stretch to the processes of recording. Of these, he is inordinately careful, one might also add increasingly so as the years go by and the need to document his own work accurately becomes more and more of an issue. These recordings – world premieres in both cases – belong to a new and welcome series planned by Mode to preserve Cage's music in (reliably) definitive form. It's

but simultaneously with other pieces. *Carriage Music* and *Fontana Mix* have been used in this way and here *Atlas Eclipticalis* (one of the scores he devised using the star map to the great wheel round the sun) is combined to magical effect with *Winter Music*, an indeterminate score for between one and 20 (in this case, three) pianos.

Cage claims only to know of three complete performances of *Atlas Eclipticalis*. That he doesn't mention Leonard Bernstein's Lincoln Centre concert of 1964, cited in *American Grove*, could mean that it wasn't complete, or that it didn't rate with the composer as a performance. It certainly didn't rate with the audience that night. The present recording by the New Performance Group really establishes the standard. They are an almost prodigally gifted outfit and it's nice to be able to pick out one respected jazz timbomast Julian Presser, working with so much confidence in this very different setting.

Like so much of Cage's work, the *Atlas* is concerned with duration. "Space horizontally equals time . . . Space vertically equals frequency." The 12 notes of the scale – and microtonal variations – are in relation to a highly relativistic staff, generated after (an idea Cage would have found expounded by Satie) the points or tones are drawn. As elsewhere, *Etudes Australes*, *Etudes Boreales* here, Cage used the chance configurations of the star atlas and the chance operations of the *I Ching* to generate his open system of pitches. The effect, particularly when set against the *Winter Music*, which depends in a similar way on Cage's heightening of imperfections in the draft paper, is astonishing.

Atlas Eclipticalis is a work of great extremes, mostly of duration, but also of *ffff* and *pppp*. In the same way, the cello version of *Etudes Boreales* is full of virtuoso leaps of pitch, some of them so dramatic as to seem beyond normal performative range. Frances-Marie Uteri approaches the work with the same calm here as she did on its premiere in Amsterdam and, in 1982, at Cage's 70th-birthday concert. Like Isabelle Ganz and Michael Pugliese, she seems utterly possessed of the music, capable of making it sound absolutely familiar and at the same time beyond any verbal or systematic rationale.

Pugliese plays both his percussion and piano parts with an astonishing concentration. The outward "simplicity" of his *Ryoanji* part is put



fair to assume that had *Ryoanji* not been "composer supervised", Isabelle Ganz and the equally extraordinary Michael Pugliese might have been sent back to the beginning when a light plane suddenly and all too audibly dived over the studio. More perhaps than his reputation was worth to deny such an ambient effect its place; certainly, it would have been appallingly cruel to interrupt or reject such a transcendently perceptive reading of the piece.

Ryoanji began life as a larger ensemble score. The compression achieved by Ms Ganz and Mr Pugliese distils all its information and potentialities into 21 minutes. Like all the other pieces on these sets, it depends to a large extent on the superimposition of separately existent scores. Cage has always allowed the possibility that certain of his pieces be played not just in different instrumental configuration

into context when one realises that on the one hand he has to strike five objects simultaneously while on the second he has to move all around and into the piano to extract the effects called for. A third hand would be no luxury.

Cage's gentle hostility to recording shouldn't be taken as any sort of cue that these are not essential adjuncts to his work. The chef's inability or unwillingness to eat the food he prepares is no comment on his commitment to the process. While we have the chance, we ought to eat.

BRIAN MORTON

WYNTON MARSALIS THE WYNTON MARSALIS QUARTET LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY (CBS 461109-1)

Recorded Washington DC, 19-20 December 1986
Kiss-My-King, Just Friends, Kiss-My-King, Jesus, Jesus, Debra's Dilemma, Jesus's Off-Tune, Jesus, As Private, Kiss-My-King, Do You Know What It Means To Me, New Orleans, Jesus, Antonio Latics, Kiss-My-King, Jesus's Dilemma, Anti-Latics
Wynton Marsalis (tr), Marcus Roberts (tp), Robert Leslie Hunt III (tb), Jeff "Tain" Watts (d)

THIS SCORING album was recorded live at Washington DC's Blues Alley, an expensive nightclub that recently played host to Courtney Pine. Despite the sleeve notes' reference to the "ritual of immediacy and exchange that takes place in the jazz club", it is just like Ronnie Scott's: the well-heeled clientele chatter on through the bass solos. Sound in general, though, is adequate.

With friends like Stanley Crouch, Marsalis hardly needs enemies; his copious, turgid prose occupies the inner gatefold like some insidious mould. In 1993, W.E.B. DuBois established black racial pride with *The Souls Of Black Folk*, a book that used Hegel's idea of *das Volk* to rally black people when the establishment was using lynch-mobs to turn back the clock on emancipation. It is doubtful that Crouch's use of Wagner, Nietzsche and Christopher Lasch indicated a similar inversion: in fact, he is peddling identical elite-art mysticism. Marsalis is the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, "bred" to save the world from the "popular trends of the last 20 years". Having castigated all that Coltrane inspired (from jazz-rock to loft and improvised music) as the ravings of incompetent charlatans, Crouch says that Marsalis "tries to an intensity similar to Coltrane's". This does no service to the well-played

lounge-jazz inside: the claim is absurd.

With Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, jazz encountered anti-art, and could thus negotiate the paradox of creativity in an age of commodity production. This has been the issue in the intervening decades. For Crouch to claim that Marsalis is "the first fresh conception of trumpet phrasing we have heard in 20 years" is ridiculous. Marsalis nowhere makes innovations to be compared to those of Don Cherry, Jacques Couillard, Bobby Bradford or Ole Daré (*Don't Forget Leo Smith and Bill Dixon - Ed*) (*And Maxfield Sabag, Alan Cherry, Lester Bowie - Other Ed*).

Ideological wrapper in the wastepaper basket, there is much to enjoy here. The opener is fast, fluid and shimmering, echoes of Booker Little. On "Just Friends" Marsalis is melodic and pretty, his muted trumpet curling and

like rib-digging funk from bassist Rob Hurst and the thrilling low-to-high register shifts from Marsalis, is the high point. Maybe this quartet could learn a lot from the scorum wit of bebop.

BEN WATSON

BILLY JENKINS & THE VOICE OF GOD COLLECTIVE MOTORWAY BY NIGHT (DCM 108-1)

Recorded London, 1987
Motorway By Night Pt 1 & 2
Chris Batchelor (s), Dave Jago (tr, db), Dai Priceband (s, bs, db), Frank Mead (s), Iain Ballamy (s, m), Mark Lockheart, Andy Sheppard (ss), Domingo Bates (ky, thn), Jenkins, Nick Page, Neill Macoll (q), Simon Edwards (b), Roy Dodd, Steve Arguelles, Dawson (d, perc), Andy McFarlane (vn), Patrick White (vln), Steve Berry (s, lo).

BILLY JENKINS' shambling tickle-the-chins-of-the-musos sixth-form wind-ups could only have a relevance in the still stand confines of jazz and new music. Anywhere else (ie pop), they would have been ignored completely or else seduced by an industry still leery over Freddie & The Dreamers. You could admire Billy, if you were the self-promoting type, for the way his music has received critical consideration in such vastly indirect proportion to its importance and worth, I suppose, but that would simply be admitting him for being British. The domestic jazz establishment, naturally concerned with the continuance of the "phenomenon" that has ensured its recent well-being, will latch on to anything that looks like keeping the rapidly deflating UK Jazz Revival buoyant for a little while longer. Were Billy American, where no one cares much about anything, especially such a marginal, unsaleable product as jazz, he wouldn't have got within 50 miles of a recording studio second time around.

Motorway By Night isn't going to change any of that much; if anything, it will only exacerbate it further. To hear him talk, Billy would like us to think his compositions defy all the traditional conventions of jazz, of music even, but at bottom *Motorway By Night* is just one long extended jam session. Discounting his badmouthing of the jazz press for being overloaded with effete middle-class intellectualism - and that in bogus proletarian tones last heard emanating from the Roky circa 1976, the inevitable legacy of growing up alongside the Banshees and Generation X, I presume -



brassy. When Marsalis lays out there is a tendency to meaningless flurry (ie, on "Debra's Dilemma"). Though the quartet is obviously drawn to the spacious, free-wheeling aspects of Miles' classic quintet with Trane and Philly Joe, they do not quite achieve that anchoring, bluesy thump.

Paradoxically, these young figures achieve a very 80s sound: polyrhythmic, scintillating and continuous. Sometimes you long for Art Blakey's forthright theme statements. Marcus Roberts' Monkisms are ill-digested, tending to mechanical and repetitive cross-rhythms. Drummer Jeff Watts, though, is terrific: cymbals spluttering and heated, bass drum accents brilliantly placed. Sometimes the set says, lacking the arrogant polish of the studio albums, but on the whole it is worthwhile. Charlie Parker's "Au Privave", with Mingus-

Billy is famous mostly through the company he keeps. Obviously both he and his press agent realise, as *Motorway By Night* pushes its collaborators – Fairground Attraction, Loose Tubes, Andy Sheppard – very much into the foreground publicity-wise. Musically-speaking, once you're past the blaring imitation car-horn introduction, it's guest-artist-under-the-spotlight time all the way.

To make things easier for everyone Billy has assembled an improvisatory vehicle that coughs, splutters, falters but mostly chugs along in a 1970 Morris Marina sort of way. There are some suitably heated exchanges among the wreckage of guitars and percussion but most eventually start to take on the aura of marginal acquaintances outstaying a welcome. This post-Art Ensemble, instrument as vulgar circus prop idea is wearing increasingly thin. Can't anyone play real notes any more? In that respect Andy Sheppard's full-throated tenor assault at the beginning of side two is the most conspicuous moment. But it's pretty small change when measured against the all-the-lads-together-what-a-larf atmosphere of the whole.

TONY HERRINGTON

CHRIS CONNOR NEW AGAIN (Contemporary C-14038)

Recorded: New York, 17–19 August 1987
Dearlly Belov'd, Dawn In Brn. n. I Never Meant To Hurt You, Autumn Muddy, Check To Check, That Face, Dawning In The Dark, It Only Happens When I Dance, With You, And About The Boy, Autumn's Song, I Wish I'd Met You, My Foolish Heart, Jubilee, Muddy, Saturday Night, Lullaby When Love I Wish I Didn't Love You So, I've Heard That Song Before, Everything Old Is New Again
 Connor (v), with Claudio Roditi (tr, flts), Bill Kirschner (ss, as, ts, f, cl), Dave Valentin (b), Michael Abene, Richard Rodney Bennett (ky), Michael Moore (b), Buddy Williams (td), Samory Figueroa (perc)

THIS ISN'T quite the record *Clavin* was. Last year's return release by Chris Connor deserved the plaudits it racked up, but *New Again* seems to go in the wrong direction, it plays up all the weaker sides of that set.

Connor's voice is in strong, dark shape; deeper, less flexible, and sometimes when she goes for her famous tremble it sounds more like a wobble. But "I Never Meant To Hurt You" and especially "I Wish I'd Met You" suggest a more impetuous control than before. She sings these with somber and thoughtful

directness, handling the full measure of the lyrics. "Dearlly Belov'd" is a decent swinger, and "My Foolish Heart" a difficult one to pale, since it often comes out too silly or sentimental – surmounts its glossy setting. Which brings us to the production and arrangements.

Helen Keane has overlooked the project. Her studio mix is basically too loud, instruments buried around Connor's voice, and while the players are good, they're often too much for the songs. It's all so obviously targeted at radio play. The two Michael Flunks songs are sweetly melodic, but the lyrics are straight out of the horizontal playboy image he soaks in – why is Connor singing this junk? The two middleys are worse. If these songs are worth doing at all, why chop them up like this? It seems like a sales pitch for a pop-jazz ticket,



and it's a poor match for such a subtle, ingenious singer.

When they stand back and let her through, as on "I Wish I'd Met You", it's marvellous. Keane made a couple of superb albums by pairing Tony Bennett with Bill Evans. Someone at Contemporary should take up a similar strategy for Chris Connor.

MIKE BISH

MARTIN ARCHER WILD PATHWAY FAVOURITES (Ladder Rung 002)

Recorded: Sheffield, 14 February 1988
Showers, Light Year, Coldest Day, Come Down, Wild Pathway Favourite, New Scientist, Jazz, Archer (ss, metallophone), Charlie Collins (ss, ts, bs, f, cl, bcl), Nick Evans (trb), John Russell (cl), Mary Schwarz (vcl), Tim Cole (clg), Michael Sepakowski (p), Paul Shaft (b), Pete Infanti (d, perc)

CONSIDER THE art of composing for improvisers. The fundamental questions needing answers look simple enough on the surface: how and who for? The ultimate, I suppose, is that what you write is based on your actually knowing your musicians' capabilities and, more importantly, the kind of interaction that will happen when they are playing free. But then Archer's cast isn't a set grouping: in spite of there being a firm base in the bunch of Sheffield-based improvisers, Archer has also chosen to throw in a couple of *ad hoc* connections in Messrs Russell and Evans who were shipped in specially for the session. Another approach is to not write anything down at all. Burch Morris' conducted improvisation, an on-course sculpting of free playing, exerts its own spontaneous compositional discipline, that too means knowing each other's moves inside out, though.

So what if you don't? The old forte ran to an introductory compositional "head", with supposedly related open-end extemporisation to follow, the bridge between the two, once it had been crossed, was all too easily forgotten. Archer's way round the pitfalls has been to structure notated and extemporised passages more closely, alternating, contrasting and overlapping short sections of each. He's not really out to blur the distinction between composed and improvised musics, more to transcend their respective formalities. As a composer he is articulate and resourceful in his structuring: "Showers" and "New Scientists" harken to the resonance of the contemporary classics, while "Light Year" pitches firmly towards the robust energy of free jazz, even a little wry humour percolates into the proceedings, particularly on the title cut with its spurring top line of sopranos.

It's not difficult to see why Archer settled on his chosen *ad hoc* members: both Evans and Russell are players boasting distinctive instrumental voices. But while Evans' animations settle comfortably within these confines, Russell's vocabulary of dry, clipped acoustics sounds metely extraneous here: a handful of fresh herbs tossed into the pot never made a Vesta packer curry taste anything other than synthetic. Maybe the results would have been stronger without them both. Still, it's a document of unbridled imagination and optimism; for that alone it's worth parting with the pounds.

DAVID BLC

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CLARINET SUMMIT
SOUTHERN BELLS

(Black Saint BRS 0107)

Recorded: Atlanta, Georgia, 29 March 1987.
*Don't Get Around Much Anymore; Fluffy's Blow; I
Want To Talk About You; Beat Box; Southern Bells;
Pardoux, Athens.*Alvin Banister, John Carter, Jimmy Hamilton (cl),
David Murray (bcl).

HAMMET BLUIETT

THE CLARINET FAMILY

(Black Saint BSR 0097)

Recorded: Berlin Festival, Philharmonie, Berlin,
November 1984.*Sub-Jump, For Muchos Noshis, Paper Work, Run Away,
To Be There, Sub Bass Improvements No. 1, River Niger,
Song For Masses*Hammet Bluiett (alto cl); Dwight Andrews, Don
Byron, Buddy Collette, John Purcell, Gene Ghee,
J.D. Parian, Sir "Kidd" Jordan (soprano), soprano,
alto, contralto, bass, contrabass (cl), Fred Hopkins
(b), Ronnie Burnage (d)

Not so long ago the clarinet was about as common in contemporary jazz as the tubaphone, and certainly rarer than the thumb-piano. An essential part of trad, of course, the clarinet was not prolific even in the swing era. In bebop it found no real usage at all. Buddy DeFranco and Tony Scott notwithstanding.

The reason usually given for its absence from bebop is that it lacked expressiveness, which hardly rings true for the instrument of Dudds, Bigard, Pee Wee Russell and even Goodman. More to the point, perhaps, was its lack of volume compared to the other horns and drums of bebop and especially the fact that, when played with any kind of accuracy, it didn't have the edge or attack to avoid glibness.

Its demise in 1960s jazz was predictable (despite Perry Robinson and the occasional backward-looking track by Rahsaan) and only the relative urgency of Dolphy's *bass* clarinet gave it any credibility. Doubtless the Art Ensemble and Braxton helped the reassessment (as usual), but its rehabilitation is mainly due to John Carter and Alvin Banister who brought it into the post-free era. Not only their specialisation but their provincial allegiance (Banister to the town of New Orleans, Carter to LA) makes them less renowned than the multi-reedmen in Clarinet Summit – Hamilton the long-time Ellington veteran and Murray, the only member of the group who's under 50.

The four work without rhythm-section, in

the manner pioneered by the World Saxophone Quartet, and explore a range of approaches, especially on longer pieces such as "Fluffy's" and the title-track. The instrument's combination of purity and richness makes it equally suitable for improvised counterpoint (shades of trad, again) and for conventional harmony (the most conventional passage being the single chorus of Ellington's "Don't Get Around", which either is or deserves to be Clarinet Summit's theme-song). Revealingly the horn seems distinctly less appropriate to punchy riffing, as on the WSQesque "Beat Box". It's noticeable too that there's less individual tonal variation than another instrument might provoke, with the exception of Murray's beautifully curled ballad sound on "I Want To Talk".

Bluiett's hour-plus festival performance, from the same year as Clarinet Summit's live

never was – a thought which may illuminate the lack of jazz staying-power of both the clarinet and flute. Despite much to admire (and certainly little to dislike) in both of these albums, it's hard to imagine them challenging the supremacy of the saxophone.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

BECKER/LINDBERG/SLAVIS
TRANSITION

(EMP 1170)

Recorded: Berlin, 17–18 July 1987.

*Penschieffig, To Be Able To, Marnander Totalitarer,
Her Majesty's Suite, Farius Ma Plavo, Herber
Alptarm, The Inside Of The Ear Is Hot, Morning Kiss,
Jazz Box, Spul-Q-Think, Kulquinta
Heinz Becker (tr, fl), Louis Slavis (sa, cl, bcl), John
Lindberg (b)*Koch/Schutz/Kappeli
ACCELERATION

(ECM 1357)

Recorded: Ludwigsburg, June 1987.

*Sly Caraldi, In Deirnon, Mador, Lousada,
Glent (lost), Tatalarmen, Nistran Koch, Acceleration
Contrôle, Gp-a-22-a-49-a-43.
Hans Koch (sa, ts, cl, bcl), Marn Schutz (clo, b),
Marco Kappeli (d).*

LOUIS SLAVIS is something of a musical joker, but he has enough fortitude and self-criticism to grant his work a hard, durable core. He's also the most interesting jazz-based musician France has produced in years (and is acquiring a modest superstar status there).

The trio session under discussion doesn't seem like typical Slavis – but nothing much does. It's a sequence of miniatures rather than a set of improvisations, although the climate is consistent through the LP: scruffy little arabesques, anchored by the lugubriously agile Lindberg, decorated in fits and starts by Slavis and Becker. Some of them, like Becker's "Herber Alptarm", are exquisitely set down: thoughtful, full-toned counterpoint and natural resolutions which recall some of Jimmy Giuffrè's music. That piece is followed by Slavis's "Inside Of The Ear", which moves straight to the outer limits usually patrolled by EMP. Lindberg's major piece, "Her Majesty's Suite", comes in his familiar ponderous style, but Slavis inserts some undercutting noises too. The session is restrained and clever; both horn players speak in gentle ways, but summon plenty of spit when it seems appropriate.

Hans Koch is another who's making sometimes startling music from the clarinet family. He also plays soprano and tenor on *Acceleration*,



debut (on *India Navigation*), is rather more varied and more bitty. Too much of a good thing in some of the freer ensembles, it's also not enough of a good thing in terms of the solo capability – both the established and younger players here would have deserved longer exposure. Purcell, Parian and even Collette, of the Jimmy Hamilton generation, only get two shots each, while Bluiett himself and Don Byron (seen here recently with Craig Harris) have three outings. Perhaps this is outweighed by some extraordinary textures, not least of the album's two tributes to Ellington ("To Be There") and Machito.

Some of the improvised ensemble sections remind me, ironically, of sounds associated with European compound music. After all, the clarinet was a virtuoso orchestral instrument back in the 19th century, in a way the trumpet

and has a formidably powerful rhythmic section at his back. This is a dense, trenchant session, sometimes a little irritating in its ingenuity. Koch's compositions never settle for anything straight up when they can juxtapose different times, set pure melodies against screechy interplay or follow angry propulsion with static effects.

"Tatzelwurm", for instance, heads off in several ways, none to a particular consequence; "Lotosida", a mournful bass clarinet solo, is nice but meaningless. Schutz and Kappeli, though, are real heavyweights, and when they're playing together — as in the brumming middle section of "Madori", the most exciting track — the record catches fire. Koch is a bit too chameleon-like on his instruments to make a single, powerful impression, and his saxophone playing is less interesting than his clarinet, nevertheless, the crashing interplay of the two sets up plenty of entertaining moments.

RICHARD COOK

BEVERLEY JOHNSTON

IMPACT
(Centrediscs CMC CD 2786)

Recorded, Toronto, no date.

Beverley Johnston (perc.), performing: Jean Piche *Steel The Thunder* (tym, gongs, salad bowls, bs dr, tam-tam), Alexia Laroche *Colours* (mem, gk, vib, with James Campbell, (dr), Gary Kuleska *Angels* (mem, tape), Serge Arcuri *Chavoux* (chimes, cymbals, tam-tam, gongs, cavales, tbr bells, cowbells, tym, noto-rins, snr d, temple blocks, wood d, mem, loudspeakers).

CANADIAN ART music has so far made little international impact. Harry Somers, now 63, has a small following for his eclectic work and his opera *Lucia Red* was a success in the US in the mid-1970s. Beyond him, though, there are few other names that will ring bells, the likes of Maurice Dela, Claude Champagne, the Ivesish Bront, McAuley and Papineau-Couture have still only local reputations.

There is, fortunately, a younger generation springing up and if individual names are not yet prominent that is also because (just as the famous National Film Board of Canada produced few *antors*) much of its work has been collectivist in essence. Percussionist Beverly Johnston is a prominent orchestral player in her native Montreal and in Toronto. She co-founded the Toronto Percussion Ensemble and is a member of the ARRAYMUSIC group.

Impact features her in a beautifully-recorded CD programme of new electroacoustic works by Canadians, her only instrumental accompanist the brilliant clarinetist James Campbell who produces a beautiful tone on Louie's *Cadenza*.

This is the most conventionally academic of the pieces, a virtuoso score for both players. Ms Louie is best known for *The Eternal Earth* which the Toronto Symphony Orchestra has championed and which is in a more compelling musical language than *Cadenza*.

Gary Kuleska offers a reminder that there are bright angels and angels who have fled the light. Recorded sound on the backing tape offers a dark commentary to the softly articulated marimba line. Even though there is no clear programme to the music, its basic conception allows a measure of ambiguity.



which is perfectly caught by Johnston's hanging resonances and muffled notes.

Chavoux, by the young Quebecois Serge Arcuri, is reminiscent in part of passages in Xenakis. Synthesised effects create "envelopes" for the widest instrumental range of the four pieces and the only one in which there is substantial scope for improvisational playing.

The best comes first. *Steel The Thunder* is a tense Promethean drama, with an extraordinarily varied role for the tympanum and gongs. It is the most purely electroacoustic of the four in that its electronic resources are directly based on samples generically very close to the instrumental part, all the electronic sounds are made by a kettle drum. The effect is mythic, weighty and, musically, very impressive.

BRIAN MORTON

HANK ROBERTS

BLACK PASTELS
(JMT 800 016)

Recorded, New York, November/December 1987
Black Pastels, Janel, Mountain Peaks, Rara Village, Chiquito, The Quintette, Grandpappy's Barn Dance, Death Dance, Scarcrow, Shakedown, Lucky's Lament, Roberts (clo, g, vin, v), Ray Anderson, Robin Eubanks (trbn), Dave Taylor (trbn), Tim Berne (ss); Bill Friesell (g, bjo), Mark Dresner (b), Joey Baron (dr).

IN THE music of John Zorn, Elliot Sharp, Glen Branca and Rhys Chatham represents the horny outer shell on the body of New York's avant garde, then that of Hank Roberts is its soft white underbelly. This isn't just down to the fact that Hank's music ripples and shimmers where others wreak tidal-wave havoc, it also has plenty to do with the way his inevitably eclectic approach results in a hazy protean shifting rather than the expected cross-cultural cut-ups. Which is probably why *Black Pastels*, his first solo recording, has appeared on the German JMT label; back home in downtown Manhattan the anarcho-executives over at Nonesuch or SST's pseudo-urban guerrillas no doubt view his liking for ethereal acoustic ballads and drifting Charles Ives-derived compositions as being too close to New Age restraint for comfort. And they may well have a point.

The major problem with Hank's music is that it lacks any singular purpose, focus or intent, an essential requirement for a genre which exists solely to ease the passage of those dark hours twice bullmarket and brasserie. The presence of such diverse sensibilities as Bill Friesell, Ray Anderson and Robin Eubanks should result in a record that moves in 20 different directions at once while still maintaining its hold on the original point of departure. Instead *Black Pastels* makes oblique reference to a huff of influences without ever pinning them down to a unifying vision. Even on the relatively agitated "Grandpappy's Barn Dance Death Dance", a rather cumbersome and misleading title, the shifts in mood and emphasis — from muted martial music through quiet string-based soliloquies to the sentimental hokum of the closing trombone/fiddle duet — are made with such delicate precision as to be peripheral. The underlying sense of a barely-seized notion is hardly ground into the dust.

Maybe Hank wants to please too many

people too much of the time. The rather precious vocal excursions of "Jam!" and "Thus Quietness", self-explanatory really, suggest he wouldn't mind rubbing shoulders with an early-day Tim Buckley or a tongue-tied Joni Mitchell, while the solo cello Hendrix-pastiche and subsequent guitar histrionics of the title track aim straight for the current Resurrection of Rock climate. On the other hand, "Lucky's Lament" makes the kind of sweeping dramatic gestures that TV producers like to play against close-up slo-mo reruns of monumental sporting occasions, last year's Johnson-Lewis clash, for instance. It's something of an epic dirge for Olympians. With Seoul still a couple of months away Hank obviously thought it prudent to shore up this end of the market early.

TONY HERRINGTON

DEREK BAILEY

IN WHOSE TRADITION?

(Emanem Improvisation Series 3404)

Recorded: London, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1979 and 1987.

Six Fairly Early Pieces; In Whose Tradition?, Three

More Paddy Power; Happy Birthday Is You; Self-

Erasing, The Last Post, Postscript

Derek Bailey (g, vi), James Callaghan, Edward and Heath, David Steel and Margaret Thatcher (vi)

IT'D BETTER come clean straight away; I've never known quite what to make of Derek Bailey's work, though Wes knows I've tried to suss it out hard enough and often enough over many years. I think one problem has been my uncertainty in tuning in to the humour in his playing, though I have treasured a photograph of him hitting a banjo with a hammer.

In Whose Tradition? is a frequently very funny record, though the humour is pretty grim, "Happy Birthday" has him speaking a gruesome catalogue of the effects of ageing while his guitar none too gently weeps at the thought of dehydrated dermises and the survival of the libido despite the onset of impotence. Still funnier is "The Last Post", part of a cassette letter to Australia recorded in a Hackney kitchen on the eve of Thatcher's canonisation in 1979. "The price of freedom," Bailey comments wryly, quoting the inscription above the collection box at the musicians' co-operative. While the politicians gibber on the radio and Bailey wistfully contemplates the possibility of a "hung parliament" his axe swings brightly through a series of almost

standard chords.

The purely instrumental tracks on one side are the earliest recordings, made between 1971 and 1975. The "Public Pieces" are taken from a concert at the ICA on 22 May 1975 and are from the same performance as "Seventh" on *Domestic And Public Pieces* which Emanem is soon to reissue. Bailey used two speakers which he controlled with two pedals producing a duetting effect which is intensified by prodigious articulation. Technically impressive as the skittering fast passages are – sceptics who claim music like this can be produced randomly should be invited to try it – I get most out of the episodes where Bailey lingers over resonances and undulations of sound.

The "Early Pieces" are six "miniatures", ranging from 44 seconds to 4 minutes 23 seconds, and strike me as highly disciplined



DEREK BAILEY
IN WHOSE TRADITION?

examinations of their material which, had they been composed by Berg or Webern, would be required study. I know it's only jazz, but I like it.

HARRY WITHERDEN

THE POINTY BIRDS

THE POINTY BIRDS (Unnumbered Cassette)

Recorded: 1987

*Supernature, Because I Love You Tilt Way You Look
Tonight, In Your Bedtime, Oh Yeah Mandy Baby, April In
Peckham, The Detectives, These And Variations,
Philadelphe, Gravel Pig*
Stephen Blake (ss), David Fitzgerald (tch), John
Edwards (b)

THE POINTY BIRDS' release is a homely cassette-only affair, but well-recorded for all that. In the absence of drums, the two string

players emphasise the percussive aspects of their instruments: the mikes are well placed to capture the clicks and snaps of their playing. "Supernature" provides an arresting introduction to the Birds' soundworld. It is a calypso built on John Edwards' thumb, showing bass. Soprano saxophone and bowed cello force the pace, concluding in a free-form crescendo that is not equalled for the rest of the tape. You keep listening to the Birds, though, because their tart, scribbling music – an interest in the "sounds" they play rather than merely the notes – is refreshingly original.

Stephen Blake's soprano playing has its roots in Lol Coxhill, the gleeful seizing on trite themes and the injection of sudden untongued swerves and spurs, the obstinate slurring of melody into something at loggerheads with the harmonic context. David Fitzgerald's cello is central, his choppy howling supplying both textural substance and East European flumboyance.

"The Detectives" has a queasy merry-go-round feel, the sort of tune Sun Ra might write after listening to Barok for a day. "April In Peckham" is a folkish pug, "Theme And Variations" disintegrates into playful baroque pastiche. These pointers are fairly irrelevant, though the music is organised, but stresses timbre and sonority in the manner of free improvisation. "Gressed Pig" consists of well-contrasted sections, but – as with the whole cassette – you never quite get the big bang you are waiting for.

Perhaps The Pointy Birds are a little too keen to be pleasant and unambitious: Sinead Codd's delightful box (a cardboard, hieroglyph be-scribbled bird whose beak shuts the lid) likewise makes a virtue of small-scale care. That is all very well and nice, but in these too short, unassuming pieces there is genuinely gritty, chafing dialogue that could benefit from a more grandstanding attitude. I want to see these birds fly!

BEN WATSON

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY THE CANNONBALL ADDERLEY COLLECTION (VOLS 4-7) (Landmark LLP 1304-7)

Recorded: San Francisco, 21 May 1960 and Los Angeles, 5 June 1960.

*The Champ, Lullaby, Azuli Sings, As Private (2 takes),
You're In My Heart Alone, News Will I Marry*
Cannonball Adderley (ss), Wes Montgomery (g),

Victor Feldman (p, vib); Ray Brown (b); Louis Hayes (d).

Recorded: Hermosa Beach, December 1950.
Sack O' Woe; Azule Sings; Our Delight; Big "P"; Blue Devil; Ecuador; What Is This Thing Called Love.
 Adderley (as), Nat Adderley (cl), Feldman (p); Sam Jones (b); Louis Hayes (d).

Recorded: New York, 23 April–12 May 1959.
If That Ain't Love; I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry; Serenata; I've Told Eriny Little Star; Barefoot Sandals Blues (2 takes), *Poor Butterfly; I Remember You* (2 takes)
 Adderley (as), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers or Percy Heath (b); Jimmy Cobb or Al Heath (d)

Recorded: Columbia-La-Tour, 5 August 1962.
P. Book; Guster; Work Song; Trouble In Mind; Dizzy's Business.

Adderley (as), Nat Adderley (cl), Yusuf Lateef (ts, ob); Joe Zawinul (p); Sam Jones (b); Louis Hayes (d).

SOME of Cannon's best work can be found in the shops again in this series, after long years of laying dormant in Capitol's vaults – yes, I know it was all done for Riverside originally, but it's a long story involving buy-backs and the like: it's ironic that Cannon's popularity at the time allowed the deal and so consigned his work to limbo for so long.

It all seems better than it did when I first heard (and released) Overall best is *Cannonball Take Charge* (ex-Riverside 1148 and Volume 6 here but chronologically the earliest of this group). Here he'd only just left Miles's band and was still working out with ad-hoc rhythm sections (though there's a lot of Miles's men on the date, Blue Note's *Sweetening Elie* is from roughly the same period and context). It's a mainstream mix of the "standards-and-a-blues" that fuelled many an album, but the songs have been cleverly chosen and reveal Cannon in full flow, working almost flirtatiously along their grain: he was never going to frighten anyone in the way that Trane or Ornette did and could, but his touch was sure and light and his improvising fluent. "Barefoot Sunday Blues" points to the future and the down-home thing with which the Adderley band found its widest audience.

I sometimes felt with that band that here was an intelligent musician exhibiting phoney stigmata for commercial gain, but heard now things like "Sack O' Woe" or "Work Song" seem no worse – and in fact rather more light-heartedly treated – than Blakey's or Silver's or Lee Morgan's exercises along similar lines. They no longer exert the ideological

dominance over other material they seemed once to have, so the regular band showcased on Volume 5 (*At The Lightbox*, ex-Riverside 9344) comes over as a well-organised outfit with brother Nat spluttering strongly and often shrilly as foil to Cannon's robust elegance. But maybe the most delightful thing about this set is that it offers the chance to listen again to Louis Hayes in full flow, a distinctive combination of power and delicacy.

Hayes turns up on the *Poll-Winners* album too (ex-Riverside 9355, Volume 4 here) along with Vic Feldman, briefly filling the piano chair in the Quintet, and who plays vibes on a marvellous version of Lehar's "Yours Is My Heart Alone" which may be compared to the version of "Serenata" on Volume 6 and tends to argue that Cannon had a remarkable ear for such improbable material which was never

Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Sir Michael Tippett (conductor), John Tunnell & Rosemary Ellison (solo viola), Kevin McCree (solo cello),* and Nigel Robson (tenor).

WIDE ACCEPTANCE of Tippett's music has been a late bloom, the public in Britain and parts of Europe only now coming to appreciate qualities which the Americans seem to have recognised long ago. During the mid-80s (and Tippett's own early 80s) there has been no shortage of performances of the operas and oratorios, nor of recordings of his most popular compositions. This album gathers together three works from what I suppose we will now be calling his early and middle periods, the *Concerto* and *Fantasia Concertante* are available in a number of recordings, but these latest versions are by no means unwelcome as they must represent Tippett's current (if not "definitive") view of the pieces.

The *Concerto* dates from 1938–9 and is one of the earliest of his works that Tippett acknowledges. Despite the Beethovenian influences the *Concerto* is, like the *Fantasia*, unmistakably the music of a sensitive man born into the world of Elgar and Vaughan Williams. There is still the legacy of the great Tudor Church composers filtered through the Edwardian perspective. But it is the perspective of Edwardians who had seen Pachelbel and the Somme and who may have foreseen Belsen and Hiroshima. It is the Elgar of the Cello *Concerto* rather than Cockayne that one hears echoes of. As Meirion Bowen notes (albeit in connection with "Songs For Dov") Tippett is "a composer who has never dispensed false optimism... His music exposes the truth. While it effuses, it also provokes."

"Songs For Dov" is the most recent, least known of the pieces included here. Growing out of *The Knot Garden* the three songs were premiered two months before the opera and show Tippett's love of jazz and the blues. Could it be this element of his writing that has made it so amicable to American audiences? By 1970 Tippett's vocabulary had changed considerably, but the same voice is frequently discernible. The music is more "modern" and fragmented, pieced together like the text from cryptic clues and allusions.

This album would make an excellent start to a Tippett collection. Like other discs in this Virgin series the pressings tend to be noisy, though the recording is extremely good.

BARRY WITHERDEN



fully explored.

The last item is what was once *Cannonball In Europe* (Riverside 9499, Volume 7 here). By then the Quintet had become the Sextet. Yusuf Lateef adds weight, but weight was precisely what the band didn't seem to need at this point, having begun to lumber along a little already. But since it was all lurching towards the bigger money and the Capitol contract maybe it didn't seem to matter too much at the time.

JACK COOKE

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT TIPPETT CONDUCTS TIPPETT (Virgin Classics VC 7 90701)

Recorded: Glasgow, July–August 1987
Concerto For Double String Orchestra, Fantasia Concertante On A Theme Of Corelli, Songs For Dov *

VARIOUS ARTISTS A TRIBUTE TO MONK AND BIRD (Affinity AFDD 187)

Recorded: New York, January 1978

Air Conditioning, Air Privilege, Bo-Lee Bolus Bo-Lee Arc, Straight No Chaser, Misterioso, Perhaps, Thud Jones (s), George Adams (s), George Lewis (rhn), Stanley Cowell (pnt), Reggie Workman (b), Lenny White (dr) Plus Cecil Bridgeswater (c) on "Bolivar", Warren Smith (perc) on "Misterioso" and "Perhaps"

LOOK AT the title and personnel but ignore the recording date and the sleeve notes and you might expect some punchy bebop revivalism, some of the idiom's best tunes seasoned with post-Coltraneisms — certainly the way a 1988 encounter between the same musicians on the same project would have panned out. But the first few notes prove you wrong. The famous theme on this album are all hidden — often played in different keys by the front line, or with such twistings and pummellings of the original tempo and phrasing as to sound like the utterances of a familiar speaker overwhelmed by hecklers.

What therefore becomes rapidly obvious is that in the first place these originals have been reconstructed by someone with some unflinching convictions about the relationship between jazz and other contemporary musics, and in the second that it's highly unlikely to have been recorded in the 1980s. *A Tribute To Monk And Bird* was actually cut ten years ago, and written by Heiner Stadler, a composer and arranger with a classical background who wanted to apply contemporary straight techniques to the two finest composers of post-40s jazz as a means of breaking with the usual chord-running exercises of bop.

It's doubtful whether anyone with an undying love for these tunes will get much more impressed about them as a result of Stadler's attentions, except by default. In the case of Monk particularly, these versions serve mostly to emphasise how effectively the composer had arranged his beautifully unlovely handful of musical pebbles in the first place — sound and open space are so tellingly counterposed by Monk that complicating his pieces only obscures their stripped-down, functional lines.

But for all the record's title, Stadler *et al* would probably have wanted the session to stand or fall in its own right, rather than as a reinterpretation of the original themes. On that basis, it's a collection of good-to-excellent

solos (virtually unmodified bop from Jones, a lot of high-speed whirling and bubbling from George Lewis, and several inspired efforts from Cowell, who sounds like an irrepressible fusion of Monk and McCoy Tyner throughout) threaded between some rather mechanistic polytonality deployed in the heads, and sometimes as labyrinthine riffs between solos.

On "Air Conditioning", Jones plays straight enough for his solo to be dropped without modification into a vintage version of the same thing, and Cowell plays with Monkish wilfulness behind it — thereby making Jones' lines sound more adventurous than they actually are. Ironically, this effect of dissonance caused by provocative accompaniment was precisely what eventually made Monk an unpopular sideman with the Minton's crowd (once Bud Powell had shown up) but 30 years later it

Beaumont is much better at such games with *alibi* *in*, and only Cowell of the soloists here really rises above the formalism. Before I listened to it I was of a mind to think that any unorthodoxy would be better than the oceans of po-faced bop "classicism" we're currently up to our necks in. Now I'm not so sure.

JOHN FOREDMAN

DAVID MURRAY CHAMBER JAZZ QUARTET THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE (Cecma 1009)

Recorded: New York, 1988

Body Batt Bolivar Breakdown, Thanks, Mingo Eyes, Kahil's Turnaround, Capote's Strid/Kahil, Dyan's, Hugh Ragin (tr, fltn), David Murray (ss, bcl), Abdul Wadud (cln), Fred Hopkins (b)

HUGH RAGIN TRIO METAPHYSICAL QUESTION (Cecma 1007)

Recorded: New York, 9 September 1984

Metaphysical Question, Variations On Paganini's, Peppermint Maltini, Lady's Choice, Fanny And Marsh, Hugh Ragin (tr, pccolo t, fltn), John Lindberg (b), Thurman Barker (perc)

DAVID MURRAY is no stranger to playing without a drummer or percussionist, from solo saxophone outings or duo settings like the album with Randy Weston earlier this year, through to the World Saxophone Quartet. This Chamber Jazz Quartet seems a natural extension of his work, and allows him to experiment with a more spacious, less frenetic sound than on his various projects with conventional rhythm sections (or as near conventional as Murray gets).

On the funky opening cut, Murray himself plays a simple bass-clarinete phrase which functions as a synchronous bass line alongside Fred Hopkins, with Hugh Ragin's plaintive trumpet and Abdul Wadud's cello embellishing the jaunty figure. The trumpeter's "Thanks" is essentially a soloing vehicle, but makes effective use of modulations in and out of double time, while the lugubrious "Mingus Eyes" features a kind of free-form ensemble counterpoint.

"Kahil's Turnaround" is the record's most effectively sustained cut, a series of duets with Hopkins' sinuous walking bass line, after a bouncy opening riff. Murray is full of fiercely controlled passion, while Abdul Wadud is fiery and inventive, alternately sonorous and



makes the idiom sound quite refreshed. Stadler's "Air Privilege" is so determined to avoid the original phrasing and notation that the performers come to sound less like adventurers and more like a band that doesn't know the tune, but the slow "Bo-Lee Bolivar, Bo-Lee Arc" is much more effective in its staggering, flailing locomotion (another glistening Cowell solo) and "Straight No Chaser" starts as a sleepwalk, passes through a phase of the horns blowing in different keys, then gets almost funny. Drummer Lenny White is powerful here (he was enjoying a busy life as a jazz-rock drummer at the time) but his work through much of the session, beset as it is with tomtom thumpings and stampings, and cymbal beats like crockery thrown at a wall, is unremitting and leaden.

A bold attempt at republishing some sacred cows, but only a patchily successful one

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biting, and Ragin both lyrical and expletory, all culminating in a joyous ensemble sign-off. "Capetown Strut" is an acerbic, rather dark, vaudevisory tribute to (I assume) the late Johnny Dyans.

Hugh Ragin gets a prominent "featuring" credit on the album sleeve, and turns up again leading his own trio on *Metaphysical Question*. The session is four years old, but sounds fresh enough; Ragin is very much out of the AACM nexus, but his playing is characterised by a rich, off-centre lyricism which is generally less abrasive than either Leo Smith or Lester Bowie, the two players he namechecks on the sleeve. On Ornette's "Lonely Woman", the trio work up a poignant but dramatic intensity which provides the best section of a good album, even if they then allow the mood to dissipate somewhat in bass and drum solos.

KENNY MATHIESON

TAL FARLOW

THE RETURN OF TAL FARLOW/1969 (Prestige 7732)

Recorded: New York, 23 September 1969.
Straight No Chaser; *Dare That Dream*; *Somewhere*,
Sometime Ago; *I'll Remember April*; *Aly Rowans*; *Go*;
She Calls Me.
Farlow (g); John Scully (p); Jack Six (b); Alan
Dawson (d).

JOE PASS

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON CONCERT (Pablo Live 2308-249)

Recorded: Akron University, Ohio, late 1985.
It's A Wonderful World; *Body And Soul*; *Bridgeport*;
Tarale; *Time Is*; *Duke Ellington's Mood*; *Joy Spring*; *I'm
Glad There Is You*.
Pass (g).

As THE guitar marches on, the classical stylists have taken up a benign, distant standing. A player such as Tal Farlow now seems as remote as Charlie Christian, compared with Scofield or Sharrock. The new players, though, still revere the craft that made the older men into masters. What will newer listeners think?

I imagine most find Joe Pass something of a bore. And *Akron Concert*, one of Fantasy's Pablo reactivations, is rather dull. The guitarist's sole concession to getting down is his tapping foot, clearly audible on all save the ballads, and the smoothness and dioristic execution of the music is just what a detractor would complain – soporific. Of course, there's much inventive construction which is masked by Pass's lack of contrast in the middle of the otherwise

perfunctory Ellington medley, he casually comes up with a surprisingly fresh stant on "Lush Life". The relaxed delivery is deceptive – I doubt if Joe relaxes for a moment, because he's just too proper for that. "Tarale" is too sleepy, and "Body And Soul" is too familiar, and the quickfire "Joy Spring" still finds him observing all the divisions. Maybe only "I'm Glad There Is You" lets his guard down, for he plays the piece very plainly, as if reluctant to disturb the melody.

Tal Farlow's record was cut after a long absence, during which he busied himself with his signposting. There is a rustiness here and there, with some of the faster leaps marred by an imperfect touchdown. Still, as he confessed ruefully in the sleeve note, "I guess if anything I've gotten faster in my old age." This was a prepared, rehearsed session, and one thing that

PERSUASION A

TWO STEPS TO EASIER BREATHING – A SOUTH AFRICAN SUITE (Bruce's Fingers BF 2)

Recorded: London, 16 February 1988.
Free Nelson; *Ross 1026*; *Liberation Dance Of The Blue
Street Devil*; *Two Bitches Bad*; *Futility*; *Free Nelson
(Reprise)*.
Martin Jones (t, flb); Peter Munns (ss, ts); Charles
Wharf (sa, bcl); Keith Tippett (p); Simon H. Fell
(b); Tony Shepherd (d).

MUCH AS I enjoy the bnp'n'Blue Note archaeology that continues to be fashionable amongst the latest generation of jazz fans, I grew up with the post New Thing jazz of the late 60s. So hard bop always had a certain historical flavour for me, whereas free jazz had been 'What's Happenin'. I have therefore derived much pleasure from the issue in the last few weeks of Jon Lloyd's superlative *Pentimento* and now this album by Persuasion plus two.

Fell's band is augmented by Wharf and Tippett and on this showing has much of the sheer power and rollercoaster momentum of Scully's legendary sextet. It also recalls the contemporary and equally wonderful Chris McGregor Group, though the South African feel, despite the title, is not especially obvious. The music seems to be responding as much to the political situation as to the musical tradition, though the two must of course be intertwined.

Regrettably I am not clear who plays soprano when, but somebody turns in some excellent work on this horn, and Munns contributes an outstanding tenor solo on "Room 1026". Fell plays some powerful bass throughout and reinforces the effect of crushing desolation on "Futility". "Free Nelson", punningly bracketing the suite, is a leaping, whooping, headlong workout which takes up close on half the total time and is worth the space.

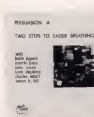
Like *Pentimento* this album is being marketed by the musicians through a small label, with distribution by Cadillac. It's a venture worth supporting.

BARRY WITHERDEN

LEO WATSON

THE SCAT MAN (Swingtime ST 1026)

Recorded: New York/Los Angeles, 1937–1946.
Un De Zay (A); *The Man With The Moonshine* (A);



Jada (A); *It's The Tame That Counts* (A); *Heavyweight* (B); *Scatter* (B); *The Blues* (B); *She Ain't No Saint* (B); *Copote* (B); *Sassy Bag* (C); *Light And Gay* (C); *Swish* (C); *Jingle Bells* (C); *Shout The Lobber To Me* (D); *Free Wheeling* (D)
(A) Leo Watson and his Orchestra; (B) The Spines Of Rhythm; (C) Leo Watson with the Vox Dickenson Quintet; (D) Artie Shaw and his New Music. Leo Watson (v) all tracks.

WHEN WORDS fail, scat takes over. As Leo Watson says in his quasi-manifesto, "It's The Tune That Counts" – "Makes no difference a hat you sing – a bit of spew, a bit of swing – just forget the lyrics when you sing." It's not so much a matter of forgetting the lyrics as transforming them into bebopbabble. Leo is a master of saying nothing with nonsense, and making it mean something. At its best, this becomes a kind of free-form poetry, as on the tracks recorded in 1945 with The Spine Of Rhythm, a proto-jazz combo which included Leonard Feather, Teddy Bunn and Red Callender. This is Leo at his best – Stanley Unwin meets Louis Jordan.

On the pre-war tracks, recorded in New York with his own band and Artie Shaw's, he has the round-toned accents of Cab Calloway. His own band had an oddly sedate sound, coming close to strict tempo – but then in comes Watson, far from sedate and strict, to vocalise the tracks into another rhythmic framework. His hilarious repertoire of percussive consonants and falsetto vowels can even transform "Jingle Bells", here performed in an unseasonable version credited to composer John Hancock – second cousin, no doubt, to John and Jane Doe.

All this is hilarious of course, but at bottom Leo and his scat brothers and sisters were attempting a transformation of vocal art every bit as liberating as bebop's instrumental revolution. Even if its achievements now seem limited, the scat "experiment" was more than a novelty dead-end.

NICK KIMBLEY

BUD SHANK/BOB COOPER **REEDS AND WOODWINDS, 1957** **VOL. 1** **(Ingo 17)**

Recorded: Hamburg, March 1957.
Walkin'; Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me, Scapple From The Apple, Take Two, Round About Midnight
Bud Shank (as, fl), Bob Cooper (ts, ob), Claude Williamson (p), Don Peill (b), Jimmy Pratt (d)

REEDS AND WOODWINDS, 1957 **VOL. 2** **(Ingo 18)**

Recorded: as above.
The Way You Look Tonight, All The Things You Are, The Nearness Of You/Bags Groove
Personnel as above.
Recorded: New York, 15 September 1956.
Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me, Polka Dots And Moonbeams, All Of You
Bud Shank (as, fl), Russ Freeman (p), Unknown b and d.

I SUPPOSE these records go under "luxury purchases" – mid-50s anshuts by two West Coast reedmen, rather peripheral when so much music is being released. But Shank and Cooper were among the finest of their school, and they were in good form in Hamburg, playing a light, stately bebop set with the excellent Williamson offering canny support



Cooper takes the leading voice – "Tickle Toe" and "The Way You Look" are tenor features, and "Round Midnight" is an oboe setpiece (which tends to prove that the oboe isn't much of a jazz instrument). It's interesting to hear him tackle different tempos – because he had a rather barly tone, he needed a quick pace to get his solos going. The mid-tempo adopted for "All The Things" makes him sound too cumbersome. Some of the best playing comes in "Scapple", where both horns beat a fluency and invention that is civilised but exciting.

Shank is much more idiosyncratic, a little nervy in his delivery, never really settling down on the beat but obviously in control. He doesn't play flute until "Nearness Of You", which is too doleful – although it's amusing to hear flute and oboe together on a very genteel

"Bags Groove". The three New York tracks are no more than filler, which makes Volume 1 the one to get if you'd like a sample. Sound is truthful if inevitably a bit rough.

RICHARD COOK

TOMMY FLANAGAN **NIGHTS AT THE VANGUARD** **(Uptown UP27.29)**

Recorded: New York, 18 and 19 October 1986.
San Francisco Holiday, Goodbye Mr Evans, Out Of The Past, A Buddy Ditty, While You Are Gone, All God's Children, Like Old Times
Flanagan (p), George Metz (b), Al Foster (d)

LIKE THE much-missed Al Haig, Tommy Flanagan is a wonderfully sensitive and astute accompanist. The question is, has he made a successful transition to solo artist, where self-effacement could no longer be a virtue? This was a move that Al, with his very similar light, almost classical touch and emotional reticence, did make successfully in his later career. On the evidence of this and other recordings, I'm not sure Tommy Flanagan has managed it.

Tommy has of course led essential support to several classic recordings – among them Coltrane's *Giant Steps* and Booker Little's *The Legendary Quartet*. But where there's no foil, the impeccable pianism doesn't always hold your interest. It's all so tasteful that unkind thoughts are prompted – like "that climax sounds well-practised". "Goodbye Mr Evans" by Phil Woods recalls another live recording session at the Vanguard 25 years before. And people made similar criticisms of that pianist to those I'm making here, but then they were wrong – Bill Evans explored an original harmonic and rhythmic conception that Tommy Flanagan doesn't have.

Al Foster's unconvincing Paul Motian impression doesn't help here, though. At times he's embarrassingly twee. Of course, Al has backed the greats (Miles, Rollins, Joe Henderson) so there must be something they like about his playing – I just can't see what it is. But all this doesn't mean there isn't a lot of worthwhile music on this release. Tommy's not an original but he's a fine pianist all the same and the selections are interesting – especially Monk's rarely performed "San Francisco Holiday (Worry Later)". OK, quite nice really.

ANDY HAMILTON

FAST LICKS

NAT DIXON QUARTET: CANYONS (*Sav-Ruk SR 1010*). Dixon's often jagged-edged tenor and guest Kenny Kirkland's piano whisk Dixon's quartet through a programme of four standards and two originals by the leader. Side one comprises warhorses "Who Can I Turn To?", "Our Day Will Come" (an alto excursion) and "I Remember You". These are proficient workouts on routines that most contemporary musicians can (and often do) run through in their sleep. Dixon's own tunes place the proceedings on a different level, and "You Know You've Changed" is especially nice. The closer, "But Not For Me", has nearly everyone nodding to "Giant Steps" and Marvin Horne turns in a fleet guitar solo.

BARRY WITHERDEN

STAN GETZ: STOK CROHM SIMMONS 'n' (Dragon DLP 157/158) The original 1958 album was issued under Getz's Verve contract, but this double (happily remastered) adds new material and extra takes. Getz is heard moving away from his earlier wispiest to something more gutsy, with occasional spots for Lars Gullin and Benny Bailey. The rhythm sections are competent but not exciting, and West Coastish arrangements of the standards are the least enthralling aspect. A couple of the originals (including Jan Johansson's previously unissued "Celebrating") prove more interesting.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

DEMBO KONTE & KAUSU KUYATEH: SIMBOMBA (*Rogue FMSL 2011*). The follow-up to *Tanana*, their first encounter, *Simbomba* was recorded in a London studio rather than Dembo's village compound. The result, as ever with kora music, is cool and sumptuously refreshing. Time has allowed these two musicians to develop outstanding levels of interplay. Their respective Gambian and Casamance styles seem to have merged slightly – Kausu has mellowed his attack, but the result is no less vibrant. Kora strings interweave peeling runs of notes while voices rasp lovingly their proverbs, poems and comment, the history of today and yesterday.

JAK KILBY

STEVE TURRE: VIEWPOINT (*Stretch ST-270*). Steve Turre is a creative and highly adaptable trombonist and his debut as a leader is

intended to highlight his versatility. *Viewpoint*, therefore, does not settle into any specific groove, opting instead for a variety of approaches that include New Orleans, Free, Modal, Salsa, a plunger-mute salute to Ellington's brassmen and so on. In his understandable desire to avoid stylistic pigeon-holing Turre appears more like a sideman at his own session, giving no idea of the real Steve Turre, unless it's as virtuoso of the conch-shell!

STUART NICHOLSON

ABDEL AZIZ EL MUBARAK: ABDEL AZIZ EL MUBARAK (*Globestyle ORB 023*). This music is very laid-back and very romantic. It has the power of total seduction, with lyrics (translated) such as "I saw the vast fading palaces of your cheeks" or "the moon was kept busy organizing the scattered stars to make you the most beautiful



melanie" The sound, too – Mubarak's silken voice, the bubbling percussion and bass, the violins and weeping tenor sax – tells tales of the sadness of unrequited love, of passion that remains as fantasy. This is the *Arabian Nights* with sequinned tuxedos.

JAK KILBY

BRIAN WOODBURN: ALL WHITE PEOPLE LOOK ALIKE (*Swave Phil 2*). *All White People* ... attempts to update the Mothers Of Invention's loopy, Orange County satire by passing it through a duck's-eye view of John Zorn's Total Fusion techniques. It feels thanks to Woodburn's inability to construct a convincing musical framework for his ineffectual zebra at post-WASP sensibilities.

TONY HERRINGTON

KISHAVAN MAMAK QUARTET: BIG TIME (*Affinity AFF 185*). Maslak recruits some impressive names – Misha Mengelberg, Charles Moffett, John Lindberg – on this angular trawl through the 80s mainstream. Herbie Nichols' near-standardised "2300 Skidoo" is combined with some sympathetic originals to produce a set that progresses from the refined to the rambuckle. The best moment comes right at the end: guest Ray Anderson's guttural trombone on "Big Shoe".

TONY HERRINGTON

COMPACT DISCS

OK, enough! This is the last *Compact Discs* column – not because we've turned against them, but there's just too many demanding space in a small section like this. From now on, CD reviews will appear in the main body of *Soundcheck*. Maybe, a few years from now, there'll be a section at the back headed *Vinyl Albums*, rare creatures.

The last round-up features, for the first and only time, a star system. For those of us who can't get by without ratings. The rest is down to the alphabet.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG All Stars Dates 1947–1950 (*Forlane 19002*; 69/38). Remastered sound, but still pretty awful. Pops has some superb moments, all the same, in this mixture of broadcast tracks. Half find him with an Ed Hall group, which is often ropey, but the first ten include Texgardner, Pee Wee and Joe Venuti, and there's plenty of fun. ☆☆

CHET BAKER When Sunny Gets Blue (*Stephane SCCD 31221*; 57/22). Sounds like Chet had to struggle through this session as, always, a few sublime moments peep through the fog of a man who's hardly playing most of the time. Two extra tracks, including a dreadfully off "I Should Care" ☆☆

KENNY BARRON QUINTET Live At Fat Tuesdays (*Enja CD-5071-49*; 70/64). Eddie Henderson, John Scubblefield, Barron, McBee, Victor Lewis – the sort of band I'd go and see, but I doubt if I'd buy the records. Scubblefield is enjoyably bad-tempered throughout, and I suppose this is authentic post-bop rather than the Berklee variety. Fifteen extra minutes on CD. ☆☆

CLIFFORD BROWN Jazz Immortal (*Manhattan CDP 746850*; 29:29). Swing-bop at its most lyrical, with the inspired pairing of Brownie and Zoot Sims. Clifford's ease and invention is still breathtaking. Immaculate sound; one alternate take, but miserably playing time. ☆☆☆

NELS CLINE Angelica (*Enja CD-5063-47*; 50:59). Guitarist Cline fronts this interesting set of dirges and slow themes, but Tim Berne is the most striking player – the setting suits his acid, unsentimental sound and phrasing. Trumpeter Stacy Rowles is a surprising and effective front-line partner. ☆☆☆

GIL EVANS New Bottle Old Wine (*Manhattan CDP 746855*; 38:26). I slightly prefer *Great Jazz Standards*, but Cannonball never played better than he does in these sassy, swinging features, a bit of natural yeast in Gil's more baroque ideas. Fabulously clear sound. ☆☆☆

DUKE ELLINGTON & His Famous Orchestra (*Forlane UCD 19003*; 67:40). No idea of the origin of these, but they're all by the great band of 1941, doing plenty of lesser-known titles. Sound is a trifle thin, though superior to most of the Forlane issues. The music is magnificent. ☆☆☆

DUKE ELLINGTON/CAB CALLOWAY & His Orchestra/Cruisin' With Cab (*Forlane UCD 19004*; 73:13). More excellent Duke, 1939–40, with further scarce titles. Cab's tracks, done a little later, are knockabout stuff – try "Frantic On The Atlantic". Aarcheck sound – any point in remastering this, one asks? ☆☆☆

DEXTER GORDON QUINTET After Midnight (*Staplechase SCCD-31221*; 60:20). One of Dex's more desultory European sessions, although Rolf Ericson's trumpet is always worth hearing. On CD only, 13 minutes of "Body And Soul". ☆☆

GEORGE GRUNTZ CONCERT JAZZ BAND '87 Happening Now! (*hat ART CD 6008*; 70:34). Straddled with stars, this 19-strong group make fair if conventional weather of Gruntz's scores. The themes strain to be far out, even weird! But it's reliable b.b. blowing at root. The trumpeters are good value: Wheeler, Schoof, Rava. ☆☆☆

HABARIGANI Habarigani (*hat ART CD 6007*; 66:38). Four horn players weave thin textures of brass and clarinets in multiple variations. Attempts at humour and mystery fall flat, ends up worthy and dull. ☆☆

JIM HALL TRIO AND TOM HARRELL These Rooms (*Decca CY-30012*; 66:45). Beautiful, magical chamber-jazz. Hall is as sharply romantic as always, his tone given a dry glow by the recording, and Steve LaSpina and Joey Baron are attentive partners. Harrell is the perfect guest, and the music ranges from small ballad cancons to long, ends-open pieces like the title tune. ☆☆☆

COLEMAN HAWKINS/BENNY CARTER & His Orchestra (*Forlane UCD 19011*; 67:21). One set each by their respective bands, 1940 or

1943. Hawk's team do a functional backdrop; Benny's at least play his witty charts. Foggy sound. ☆☆

GERRY MULLIGAN California Concerts Vol 1 (*Manhattan CDP 746860*; 48:13). Superb Mulligan. This 1954 date, with John Eardley in for Baker, has a cutting edge in "Blues Going Up" and "Yardbird Suite" which Jeru's romantic streak sometimes obscured; and "Little Girl Blue" is a ballad of straight, fearless eloquence. Three new tracks, marvelous sound. ☆☆☆

GERRY MULLIGAN/CHET BAKER Reunion (*Manhattan CDP 746857*; 67:07). A little-known session from '57, this isn't quite as sharp as their first Pacifics – Baker is a little routine, and Mulligan sounds too hurried on some of the up-tempo pieces – but the sound of the quartet remains unique, with Henry Grimes and Dave Bailey on rhythm. Five new tracks, pristine sound. ☆☆☆

ANNIE ROSS Sings A Song With Mulligan (*Manhattan CDP 746852*; 52:17). Annie sings them sweet and low – her approach is rather heavy-handed on some of the ballads, but it suits the darling textures of Mulligan's backing. Art Farmer and Chet Baker share trumpet duties; five new tracks, and all in marvelous PJ sound. ☆☆☆

WAYNE SHORTER The Vee Jay Years (*Affinity CD Charly 121*; 72:06). Useful pairing of Shorter's first two Vee Jay albums as leader. Nothing like as strong as his later Blue Notes, but solid, sometimes urgent hard bop with the occasional hint of darkness. ☆☆☆

NANA SIMOPOULOS Wings And Air (*Enja CD-5031-31*; 71:40). Folkie tunes on guitar, with famous world-music names helping out. Pretty, though lacking the fibre to sustain the session – a couple of themes grow hypnotic, but the rest are wisps of smoke. ☆☆

ART TATUM Solos 1937 And Classic Piano Solos (*Forlane UCD 19010*; 51:36). The first 12 are very short pieces in rice krispie sound; the rest are clearer, longer, and often surprisingly reserved. But then hear what he does to "I Know That You Know": Art Tatum, still too modern for most of us. ☆☆☆

GUST WILLIAM TSILIS Pale Fire (*Enja CD-5061-33*; 43:08). Leader of quintet plays



1943. Hawk's team do a functional backdrop; Benny's at least play his witty charts. Foggy sound. ☆☆

SAM JONES QUINTET Visitation (*Staplechase SCCD-31097*; 55:53). Crackling post-bop with Terumasa Hino and Bob Berg in hungry form; the late bassist, always modest, earns great credit. An extra 17 minutes added to the original 1978 LP. ☆☆☆

FRANZ KOGLMANN About Yesterdays Eszthetics (*hat ART CD 6003*; 62:09). Jazz standards rearranged by this enigmatic brassman, for quintet; Steve Lacy and drummer Fritz Hauei also arrange, and "St Thomas" and various Monk tunes become bizarre little fantasies. Lacy laps it up, Koglmann is all science and study, and the drums patter and

vibes, Arthur Blythe sits in, music is tepid modal fare with the occasional solo for a bit of fire. Blythe sounds like he's slumming but manages a few bursts of flame. ☆☆

RICHARD COOK

OUTLINES

Paul Desmond's duos with Jim Hall were the epitome of early-60s cool. Graham Lock awards a Golden Olive to the man who wanted to sound like a dry martini.

"I HAVE won several prizes as the world's slowest alto player as well as a special award in 1961 for quietness." Paul Desmond's *Take Ten* liner-note tells you more about his diffident humour than it reveals about his music. To play as "slowly" as Desmond — to float so effortlessly above the beat and to invent such relaxed, fluent solos — required the lightning reflexes of a master improviser. That this expertise was hidden beneath the music's calm surfaces (plus the fact that he spent nearly 20 years as a sideman to the frequently dull Dave Brubeck) has meant a degree of neglect for Desmond which closer attention to his playing argues is unfair. Mosaic's recent release of a six-LP box-set which collects Desmond's quartet recordings with guitarist Jim Hall (another doyen of the art of understatement) provides the ideal setting to hear the altoist at his best and to attempt a more judicious appreciation of his talents.

Born Paul Breitenfeld in 1924, Desmond (he took the name from a phone book) first met Brubeck in San Francisco during the war, played in his octet in the late 40s and became a regular member of his quartet in 1951, remaining until 1967. From the outset Desmond was an original stylist, one of the few altoists of the time who didn't even try to sound like Charlie Parker but preferred to work out his own reserved yet graceful romanticism, the lines finely spun by an erudite wit with which, like Rollins, he wove brief quotations into the fabric of his solos. This approach, coupled with a pure, almost vibrato-less tone, gave him a distinctive sound which has never been replicated: Desmond remains one of the handful of players who are instantly recognisable, even to the untutored ear.

In the 50s the Brubeck quartet were treated almost as pop stars, a phenomenal hit on the

college circuit, although the leader's stiff improvisations and self-conscious experiments with time signatures made them less popular with critics. However, in the 60s, amid the furor of Free Jazz and Black Power, the quartet's "cool" sensibilities and Brubeck's borrowings of European forms made them definitively unhip. (A similar fate, for similar reasons, befell John Lewis and the MJQ.) The gap between the militant rhetoric of the New Musicians and the seemingly casual, cerebral approach of the Brubeck group can be gauged if you compare and contrast Archie Shepp's notorious declaration that his saxophone was a machine-gun with Desmond's wry wish to "sound like a dry martini".

Yet the opprobrium hurled at Brubeck's music largely excepted Desmond, whose softly-spoken alto eloquence could disarm the most vitriolic critics. As Martin Williams



wrote in 1959, "Desmond seems to be able to have it both ways. If you don't listen, you might think his work as blandly pleasant as anyone's. But very soon, without shouting, he is making you listen. Then you hear something."

That something is easier to hear (or at least to listen to) in the recordings he made outside of the Brubeck quartet, particularly in his two LPs with Gerry Mulligan and the five he cut with Jim Hall. It is the latter recordings, made between 1959 and 1965 and featuring MJQ drummer Connie Kay (plus various bassists), which Mosaic have now reissued in a box-set. As is customary with Mosaic, sound-quality and packaging are exemplary; while the music itself comes close to perfection. Their dynamic range may be small, their emotional spectrum relatively limited, yet Hall and Desmond

complement each other like velvet fist in velvet glove: runs of pellucid guitar notes fall through the space in tandem with the alto's gliding, honey-toned shafts. Only the duo's deftness of touch and remarkable sense of restraint — which becomes here a touchstone of artistic integrity — keep the music clear, uncluttered. Nat Hentoff once called Desmond an "urbane dreamer" and these 50 performances — reflective ballads, slow blues, gently sensuous sambas — often seem laid-back to the point of lassitude, yet listen closely and there's not a single slack take or fake rhetorical flourish in nearly four hours of immaculate lyrical invention.

Discophiles will want to know that those four hours comprise the *First Place Again* LP which Desmond and Hall made for Warner Bros in 1959; their four RCA LPs — *Take Ten*, *Basia Antigua*, *Glad To Be Unhappy* and *Easy Living*; one track — "Sonic" — from the 1959 sessions available before only on a long-delayed *Playboy* anthology; and 12 previously unissued tracks from the RCA sessions, including five — "Out Of Nowhere", "Rude Old Man", "Samba Lepeda", "By The River Saint Marie" and "All Through The Night" — which are not alternate takes but genuinely new material. (There is also one mystery: the track "Alianza" from *Basia Antigua* is neither included on the records nor mentioned in Doug Ramsey's otherwise exhaustive notes. Can someone please explain why it's been so casually erased from history?)

Sadly, it was ten years before Paul Desmond again made music of a comparable beauty; and this not long before his death from lung-cancer in 1977. After a period in which he frequently sounded out of place amid fusion, strings, Simon & Garfunkel songs and Creed Taylor productions, he returned to the quartet-with-guitar format, the guitarist in this case being Canadian Ed Bickert. The resulting albums — *The Paul Desmond Quartet Live* (Horizon) and the posthumously-released *Paul Desmond* (Artists House), both taken from a 1975 Toronto concert — were among his finest creations since the collaborations with Hall. They make a fitting last showcase for the facility, wit and terse lyrical flow which remained his hallmarks to the end.

GRAHAM LOCK

The Complete Recordings Of The Paul Desmond Quartet With Jim Hall (MR6-120) is available from Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut 06902.

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IN WALKED BUD

RE: PAGE 16, Wire 53, "Von And On"
— surely Bud is THE senior Freeman of
Chicago!

ROGER DALLEYWATER, Radio Kent,
Canterbury

TENDER IS THE NOTE

RE: CHET Baker 1929–1988 by Mike
Zwerin (Wire 33). Dear Dix, I appreciate your
sensitive word on Chet's "tenderness" but
disagree with what you said about being too
vulnerable. I don't think artists can be. You
seem to be still perpetuating the male gonad
style of playing jazz as expressed in *To Be Or
Not To Bop*. You, who pride yourself on new
images and creativity in music but continue to
use stereotypes, don't show your "toughness"
in the most sensitive light.

Chet was intelligently tough and lacked
nothing — vulnerability was why one solo of his
stays in my heart while a hundred of yours

THE WRITE PLACE

*

Hate mail and love letters to:

Wire,

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don't mean much. I only hope for the
incarnation of other delicate, Lester-inspired
artists who can show their *feminine* side — on
the order of Chet, Paul, Warne and Lennie, to
name only four, sadly all departed. Thanks
Mike — but I don't buy your "bad old days" at
all.

RUSSELL THORNE, Madison

GOOD NIGHT MR BERNSTEIN

GLAD TO read more stuff on new music —
that's "new" as in "contemporary classical", as I
believe you used to call it — in your estimable
magazine. It seems to me that the real
initiative is coming from composers these
days, not all your whacked-out "improvisers"
who aren't doing anything more than recycle
old bebop licks. How about more on the men
and women who put pens to staves in the name
of art?

FRED PARFITT, Colchester

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